

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Town of Alford

2004



Prepared By



This document was prepared with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Economic Development.



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Acknowledgements

Members of Alford's Community Development Advisory Committee who worked tirelessly for over two (2) years to provide the town with a vision for the future in Open Space, Transportation, Economic Development, and Housing. It should be acknowledged that without the dedicated hours of assistance and technical support by these Committee Members this report could not have been completed.

Community Development Plan Advisory Committee

Billie Best (Chair)
Robert Doerr
Carol Sue Donelan
Tom Doyle
Henry Flint
Paul Negrini
Mary Poole
Will Ryan
Frank Whisenant

Thank you for helping identify and plan for Alford's future!

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program



EXECUTIVE ORDER 418



Introduction

Introduction

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Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program

On January 21, 2000, then Governor Paul Cellucci issued Executive Order 418, a measure designed to help communities plan for new opportunities while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure improvements, and open space preservation.

Technical assistance and grants of up to \$30,000 were made available to assist communities in producing Community Development Plans. Community Development Plans are intended to provide guidance as cities and towns consider options and avenues for future development. The plan was to focus on housing, economic and community development, transportation, and open space. The plan was also to include strategies for how the community will develop housing that is affordable to families and individuals across a broad range of incomes.

The Town of Alford has not conducted any organized community planning efforts in its recent history. The Town chose to participate in the Community Development Plan (CDP) program as an opportunity to create its first Open Space Plan and to begin addressing other planning issues of community concern. Some of the issues of concern and desired products from the Community Development Plan included preparing an Open Space Plan, determining ways to sustain local agricultural enterprises, determine approaches for addressing issues of local housing development and affordability, and the creation of an Official Map for the Town. Through the pre-planning efforts, the Town anticipated that a key benefit of the Community Development Plan process would be to generate public discussion that would be informed by technical research and would result in actionable documents that could be used by the town to support future decision-making efforts as related to local growth and development. The town further realized it was not eligible for most state and federal community development grants and many private grants because we have done no baseline community planning. This Plan is viewed as an instrument that will lay the groundwork to apply for funding for future community development efforts.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Town's Community Development Plan Advisory Committee that consisted of nine core members directed the Community Development Planning process. The Committee was comprised of local residents representing a broad range of community interests. Numerous other town officials and local residents participated at various stages of the process which lasted nearly two and one half years. The Advisory Committee held 8 public meetings specifically related to the development of CDP. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission acted as lead consultant in preparing the plan and providing staff support and technical assistance and the GIS mapping components. The Open Space Element of this plan was prepared by University of Massachusetts Extension Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Program.

Housing Element

The housing profile and needs assessment indicated that Town of Alford, like many other small towns in Berkshire County, does not have a single housing unit that qualifies for the Chapter 40B affordable housing inventory. The assessment also indicated that about 28% of Alford households are of low-moderate income. The cost of existing housing has been rising rapidly, consistent with other similar areas of southern Berkshire County. The cost of new homes being built in Alford has risen significantly since the late 1990s. The assessment also found that about 71 % of the homes in Alford are more than 30 years old. Alford still has some homes that are affordable across a broad range of incomes. However, the affordability analysis did indicate some gaps in affordability at the low and moderate-income levels. The Town also has a small supply of rental units (about 5% of total housing stock) that are affordable relative to rental units in other neighboring communities.

The following recommendations were developed to expand affordable housing opportunities in Alford:

- Form an affordable housing committee
- Develop an affordable housing plan
- Consider the creation and adoption of by-laws that the need for affordable housing with concerns for open space protection
- Work with regional housing organizations to seek Executive Order 418 certification
- Begin involvement in developing affordable home ownership options
- Consider the creation of a Community Housing Trust
- Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act
- Determine interest/support among local framers to develop on-site worker housing
- Consider options for development of affordable homeownership options
- Identify aging or dilapidated homes that require rehabilitation
- Consider participation in a local or regional housing rehabilitation program

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element provides an economic data profile of Alford, which provides socio-economic background data for the town and a narrative element that documents and analyzes existing economic conditions. The economic development element also provides a summary of the town's challenges and opportunities as related to economic development.

Some of the challenges facing Alford are; 1) narrow tax base that is heavily dependent on residential taxpayers, 2) resistance to nearly all types of commercial development, 3) lack of appropriate infrastructure to encourage economic development, even on a small-scale, 4) receding role of agriculture in the local economy. The issue of agriculture and maintaining viable local farms was a central focus of this element and the Open Space element of this plan. In addition to working to maintain the remaining farms in Alford, another area of potential economic opportunity appeared to be the significant number of local, home-based business.

To improve economic conditions in Alford the following recommended actions were provided:

- Support local lands being put into Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Develop an Agricultural Profile for Alford,
- Consider establishing a local, or regional Agricultural Committee, Agricultural Development Corporation or Farm Trust
- Educate community and the region on the importance of agriculture to the local economy and character
- Identify farm owners and operators that may need additional community support and assistance to remain viable
- Identify residents or organizations that are interested in cultivating local farmlands and initiating agricultural enterprises.
- Connect identified farmers and potential farmers with support organizations that can provide organizational and technical assistance
- Connect local farmers with public rural/agricultural development programs and funding sources and support local applications for funding
- Support the creation of non-traditional agricultural development models – e.g. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), specialty crops or niche farming, agri- tourism
- Foster partnerships and working relationships with existing regional agricultural organizations ...
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they are “farm-friendly” and do not pose potential barriers to responsible farm operations that would like to expand or start-up
- Ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the community.
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they do not pose barriers to the type of commercial development activities that would be most suitable in Alford
- Support the retention of successful existing businesses including farm operations.
- Identify and support local establishments that are successful and may be considering expansion. Once identified, connect these businesses with appropriate organizational and financial resources (e.g. grants, low-interest loans, investment tax credits etc..)
- Explore means of improving local infrastructure and tele-communications system, particularly accessibility to reliable cell-phone coverage and high-speed internet

Transportation Element

The transportation element focuses on the creation of an Official Map for the Town of Alford. The official map, once formally adopted by a town, becomes a legal instrument that graphically delineates right-of way ownership, maintenance responsibilities and provides towns with guidance in determining frontage claims for the purposes of ANR development. The process for developing the map required extensive research involving various historic and current maps, registry of deeds searches, interviews and meetings with local officials and residents to determine current road status and classification.

The primary products that were developed as part of Official Map task are:

- Narrative Report describing rationale, procedural issues and substantive issues related to creating the Official Map
- The Official Map document (note that the Official Map is not effective until has been reviewed and approved by the local Planning Board and then formally adopted by Town Meeting.

Open Space Element

The Open Space element of this Plan includes excerpts from the Alford Open Space Plan and the GIS Open Space mapping components. This is Town's first Open Space Plan. This Plan describes some of the important cultural, historical and natural assets in the Town and provides recommendations for conserving natural and agricultural lands and features, enhancing recreational opportunities and maintaining the unique pastoral character of the Town.

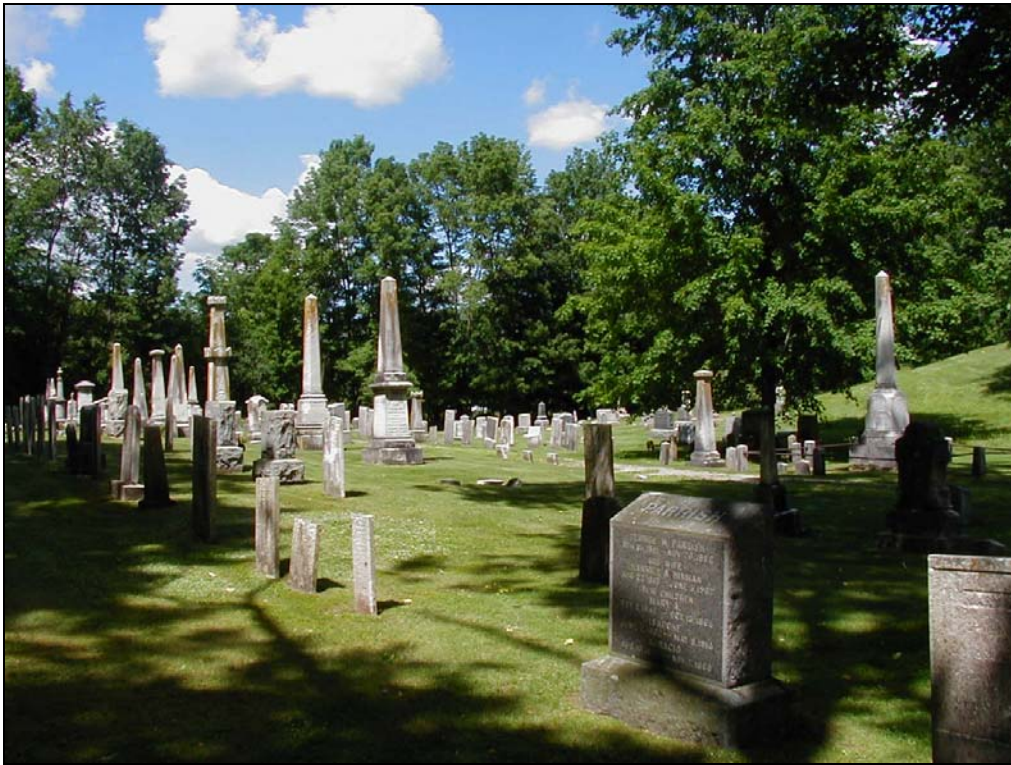
A summary of some of the key recommendations are provided below.

- Establish an Open Space Committee
- Protect all water resources: ponds, streams, wetlands and sub-surface storage areas
- Preserve significant open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately.
- Preserve familiar vistas, roads, gateway areas and historic sites.
- Encourage agricultural enterprises/landscapes.
- Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Community Setting



Community Setting



The Town of Alford is a small rural community that is located in the southwest portion of Berkshire County. The Massachusetts' towns that border it are Great Barrington in the East, Egremont in the South and West Stockbridge in the North. The Town's of Hillsdale and Austerlitz in New York State form the western Boarder.

Alford was incorporated in 1773 when the Town was pieced together from various sources including a fifteen thousand acre section that was the Green Land Grant. Later, Great Barrington annexed a small section of its land along Long Pond Road in 1778. The Town has a picturesque landscape of forested hillsides and rolling pastureland. Alford's diversity of landscape is seen in low valleys of about 850 feet to high hills of 1,650 feet. Tom Ball Mountain rises to about 1,930 feet along the northeastern boarder with West Stockbridge and Great Barrington. Alford has approximately 263 acres of land in permanently protected open space making it one of the least protected places in Massachusetts. This small hamlet tucked away in its quite valleys has a one-room schoolhouse, a church and a town hall. The Town has about 400 year-round residents according to the 2000 US Census Bureau. Alford's pastoral and laidback atmosphere make it a desirable place to live for its full-time and seasonal residents.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Open Space and Recreation Plan



Open Space and Resource Protection

Introduction to Open Space
Overview of Open Space and Recreation
Open Space Suitability Map

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Introduction to the Open Space Element



Residents of Alford revere open space as one of their principal assets to the community. The 2004 Alford Open Space and Recreation Plan documents the Town's dedication to preserving and protecting Open Space for the future. This Open Space and Recreation Plan was developed in large part to help guide and inform the actions of our local officials. The CDP program allowed the community to collect and compile demographic, cultural and ecological data. The Town was also able to solicit community input, develop goals and a plan for future action.

This Open Space element includes a summary of the 2004 Open Space Plan and the draft goals and actions items. The following section of the completed report is a brief overview of the plan. For further inquiry, the completed document can be viewed in its entirety at the Alford Town Hall.

Alford Open Space & Recreation Plan

Prepared by

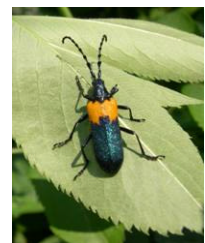
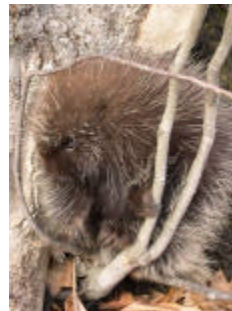
Alford Community Development Plan Advisory Committee

With assistance from

Laurie Sanders & Kasey Rolih, UMass Extension

in cooperation with

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



May 2004



River, near Route 71, Alford

*When breezes are soft and skies are fair,
I steal an hour from study and care,
And hie me away to the woodland scene,
Where wanders the stream with waters of green,
As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink
Had given their stain to the wave they drink;
And they whose meadows it murmurs through
Have named the stream from its fair hue.*

An excerpt from Green River, by William Cullen Bryant, describing one of the author's favorite haunts. Published 1820.

PLAN SUMMARY

Alford is in an enviable position. Unlike so many Massachusetts communities, it has not yet suffered from sprawl, insufficient water supplies, or pollution from hazardous wastes. In order to prevent such degradation and protect our town's natural resources and scenic vistas, we need to take preventative steps.

The intention of this Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) is to do just that—to plan efficiently, wisely and fairly for Alford's future. It summarizes our town's ecological, historical and recreational resources, identifies our conservation and recreation priorities and includes a realistic schedule to complete the recommended actions. The OSRP also incorporates issues such as land use, finances, and demographics, which are inherently tied to our community's development.

To help plan for our town's future, a Community Development Plan Advisory Committee was established in 2003. The committee members included more than 50 members of the Alford community; Billie Best was the chairperson. The Committee's responsibilities included addressing development, affordable housing, transportation and open space and recreation issues. To complete this OSRP, committee members worked with staff from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (Bryan Boeskin, Mark Maloy, Peter Falcier) and UMass Extension (Kasey Rolih, Laurie Sanders).

If Alford plans wisely and implements the action items recommended here, we believe that our community will be able to preserve the qualities that define the character of our town and that we all hold dear—its spectacular landscape features, its rich history, clean water, outstanding wildlife habitat, and its agricultural heritage.

The Dunn farm on the New York line.



INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

Land is one of the most precious assets our community possesses. How we use it shapes our town's character and vitality. Alford is fortunate because its rural character and scenic beauty--the qualities that appeal to so many of us—remain largely intact. Without a plan, future residential development in Alford could disrupt the fabric of our community and also harm our natural resources.

At present, approximately 13% of our town is permanently protected. Development on steep slopes and ridgelines has been regulated since our town passed the Scenic Mountain Act in 2001. Today, one of the most serious threats we face is the loss of our community's agricultural traditions. This, along with the possibility of new, out-of-place development and high-intensity recreation, are chief among residents' concerns. Without careful planning and zoning, the fabric of our community and the environment we cherish could easily be damaged.

This OSRP was developed in large part to help guide and inform the actions of our local officials. Upon approval by the State's Division of Conservation Service, it will also allow our town to apply for conservation grants. The Self-Help grants, which are administered by the MA Division of Conservation Service, can be used to reimburse the town for costs associated with land acquisition, appraisals, surveys, deed transactions, and other activities related to protecting land for conservation, water supply, or recreational purposes. For Alford, the reimbursement rate from Self Help is 52% (up to \$250,000).

Planning Process & Public Participation

Using funds from Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (Executive Order 418), the Alford Selectmen voted in 2003 to create an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The plan was completed with assistance from the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee (CDPAC), Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and UMass Extension. UMass Extension provided technical assistance on issues relating to biodiversity and, with input from community leaders, was responsible for writing this document.

In April 2003, Alford's Community Development Plan Advisory Committee (CDPAC) developed a questionnaire, which was sent to each resident. The questionnaire included topics ranging from affordable housing and transportation to open space and recreation. 39 % (155/400) of residents responded to the recent questionnaire. With respect to open space and recreation, the responses clearly indicated that Alford residents care deeply about protecting the town's rural character, its agricultural traditions, scenic views, clean water, wildlife habitat and important historical and recreational resources (See Appendices 1 and 2). The survey also recognized that if the rate of residential growth continues at current levels, Alford could:

- Degrade water resources and wetlands;

- Lose landscape features that attract people to the area;
- Face inappropriate, out-of-scale development;
- Experience increased traffic;
- Lose its middle-class population base, which cannot compete with the rising cost of housing and land; and
- Stress town services.

Input into the plan was made possible through an extensive e-mail network and five public meetings (April 2003, July 2003, December 2003, March 2004, May 2004). Additional discussions regarding open space & recreation issues took place during regular meetings of the CDP Committee. At a meeting in December 2003, 18 members of the community participated in a discussion of the OSRP's goals and objectives and the 5-Year Action Plan; at the March meeting, 11 people participated in the correcting and amending a draft proposal; at the May meeting, 10 residents participated. Additional comments were received by e-mail. Public participation in the open space planning process was also promoted through the development of a large, glossy poster (Appendix 3), which was posted in the town hall beginning in September 2003 and the publication of an article on open space planning in the Alford Newsletter (Appendix 4). Finally, UMass Extension sought outside opinions about open space and recreation issues through conversations with staff from Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Massachusetts Department of Conservation Recreation (formerly Department of Environmental Management), and MassWildlife; these comments are incorporated into the plan.

Environmental Challenges

At present, Alford fortunately does not have any known hazardous waste or brownfield sites, and there are no significant erosion or sedimentation problems in town. Flooding is a potential issue along Alford Brook, and in 2002 a section of bank on the Green River was stabilized due to the threat of erosion from the River.

The big challenges we face are the loss of farms and development pressure. The economic future of our local farms is uncertain especially as land values rise. Out-of-scale homes or homes constructed in scenic viewsheds are also issues. Since 1997, more than **X** new homes have been built. In order to preserve the important open spaces that define our community, help retain our town's agricultural heritage, safeguard water quality and conserve ecologically significant areas, we must make tough decisions including:

- Protecting the town's rural character by precluding changes that would damage scenic roads, views, sensitive resource areas (cultural, natural, agricultural or recreational), and water quality by implementing creative zoning techniques and conserving land;
- Protecting water quality by addressing septic system failures and educating land owners about aquifers, vegetative buffers, lawn chemicals and road runoff;
- Managing invasive species that can impair natural systems;

- Improving recreational resources by creating new trails and upgrading areas to improve bicycle safety;
- Creating incentives for agriculture; and
- Identifying, protecting and maintaining cultural/historical resources.

B. Management Needs

Like all towns, Alford's management needs are multiple and varied.

Recreation:

- Maintain ballfield
- Enhance recreational opportunities for residents through the creation of new trails (pedestrian and bicycling) and playing fields.
- Create a wildlife trail/viewing blind near the wetland behind town hall.

Historic

- Maintain town-owned historic resources (cemeteries, church, bridge, buildings).
- Ensure un-protected historic features are not inadvertently destroyed.
- Inventory historic resources in town.

Water Quality

- Educate landowners about non-point source pollution (fertilizers, maintaining vegetative buffers, etc).

Agricultural

- Provide incentives for farmers to remain in farming and keep farm fields open. At the town level, we can do this through education and where possible, local tax incentives.

Ecological

- Maintain the integrity of natural areas by controlling the spread of invasive non-native species.
- Conduct biological investigations by qualified biologists to help further refine our town's conservation priorities. Certify vernal pools.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: To preserve and protect the natural resources, biodiversity, rural character, farms and historic assets of our community.	Objectives: 1) Preserve a variety of open space in town including open fields, agricultural lands, wetlands and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately. 2) Protect all water resources: ponds, streams, and wetlands from degradation and pollution. 3) Preserve familiar vistas, roadsides, dirt roads, gateway areas and historic sites. 4) Encourage agricultural enterprises and preserve agricultural land. 5) Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment.
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5-Year Alford Open Space Action Plan

Objective	Implementation:	Boards/Agencies Involved	Year
1. Establish Open Space Committee	a) Oversee & monitor implementation of the Open Space Plan	Select Board Conservation Commission Alford Land Trust	2004
2. Protect all water resources: ponds, streams, wetlands and sub-surface storage areas from degradation and pollution.	a) Meet with Great Barrington officials to discuss actions to safeguard the water quality and quantity of streams in Alford that are significant to public drinking water supplies	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission Board of Health	2004
	b) Work with Highway Dept for use of Best Management Practices to reduce NPS pollution by sand, salt and gravel, mitigate existing problems, and minimize salt use.	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission Select Board	2004
	c) Research changes to standards for perc tests in Title 5 (1" in 30 minutes to 1" in 60 minutes)	Open Space Committee Board of Health Conservation Commission Select Board Planning Board	2004
3. Preserve significant open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately.	a) Evaluate and prioritize areas for action, and acquire/conservate key parcels to safeguard wildlife corridors, fields and meadows; prevent forest fragmentation and protect lands of significance within Alford and along its borders	Open Space Committee Planning Board Conservation Commission Alford Land Trust DCR (formerly DEM) Neighboring towns, local conservation organizations	2004
	b) Identify high value areas using Biomap and biodiversity models, historic, agriculture and recreation features and levels of development risk using assessor's maps and protected land data	Open Space Committee Planning Board Conservation Commission Alford Land Trust	2005
	c) Designate stumpage fees from Chapter 61B properties for maintenance of town-owned open space	Select Board Conservation Commission Open Space Committee	2005
	d) Consider strategies to protect biodiversity values (cluster housing) and property tax implications	Planning Board Select Board Open Space Committee	2005
	e) Amend subdivision control law to require the setting aside of open space as a condition of approval	Planning Board Select Board Open Space Committee	2005

	f) Convene a committee to research the Community Preservation Act	Select Board Conservation Commission Alford Land Trust	2007
	g) Survey and certify vernal pools	Conservation Commission Residents BCC & Simon's Rock students	Annual
	h) Educate landowners about conservation options and inform all stakeholders to guide impact of build-out. Host workshops with BNRC for landowners. Distribute summary sheet of conservation issues pertinent to Alford landowners, real estate agents, etc.	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission Select Board Alford Land Trust	Annual
	f) Identify, map and control invasive plant species that may threaten the integrity of sensitive natural areas	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission Alford Land Trust local conservation orgs, Project Native	Annual
	i) Get GIS/map updates from UMass Extension, BNRC and BRPC on biodiversity values, protected open space, vernal pools, etc	Open Space Committee	Annual
4. Preserve familiar vistas, roads, gateway areas and historic sites.	a) Have highway department apply Best Management Practices and identify important trees; consider Heritage Planting program	Highway Department Select Board	2004
	b) Work with the Town Tree Warden to implement timely tree cutting and trimming. Consider re-establishing the position of Tree Warden as an elected post.	Tree Warden Highway Department	2004
	c) Convene a committee to study the implementation of a scenic road overlay & investigate the Scenic By-Way program to access federal and state grants to acquire scenic easements and limit incompatible development activities	Planning Board Select Board Open Space Committee	2004
	d) Consider creating an Alford Historic Commission	Historical Commission	2005
	e) Inventory historical assets (e.g. Alford Marble Works) and develop programs that encourage appreciation/preservation of Alford history	Historical Commission	2005

5. Encourage agricultural enterprises/landscapes.	a) Allow worker housing on working farms	Planning Board Select Board	2005
	b) Publicize the farm viability program	Planning Board Select Board	2004
	c) Promote agricultural careers and apprenticeship opportunities through regional schools and town events		2005
	d) Eliminate the tax assessment on grazing animals	Tax Collector Select Board	2005
	e) Promote agricultural enterprises in town	Select Board	Annual
	f) Preserve agricultural land	Select Board Conservation Commission, Alford Land Trust APR program, other partners	Annual
6. Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment.	a) Consider development of new playing fields	Selectboard	2004
	b) Develop a wildlife management plan for the wetlands in the center of town	Alford Land Trust Conservation Commission Select Board	2005
	c) Plan a biking route in town	Select Board	2006
	d) Identify trail locations and try to secure public access	Conservation, Alford Land Trust	2005-7

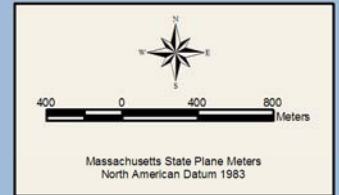
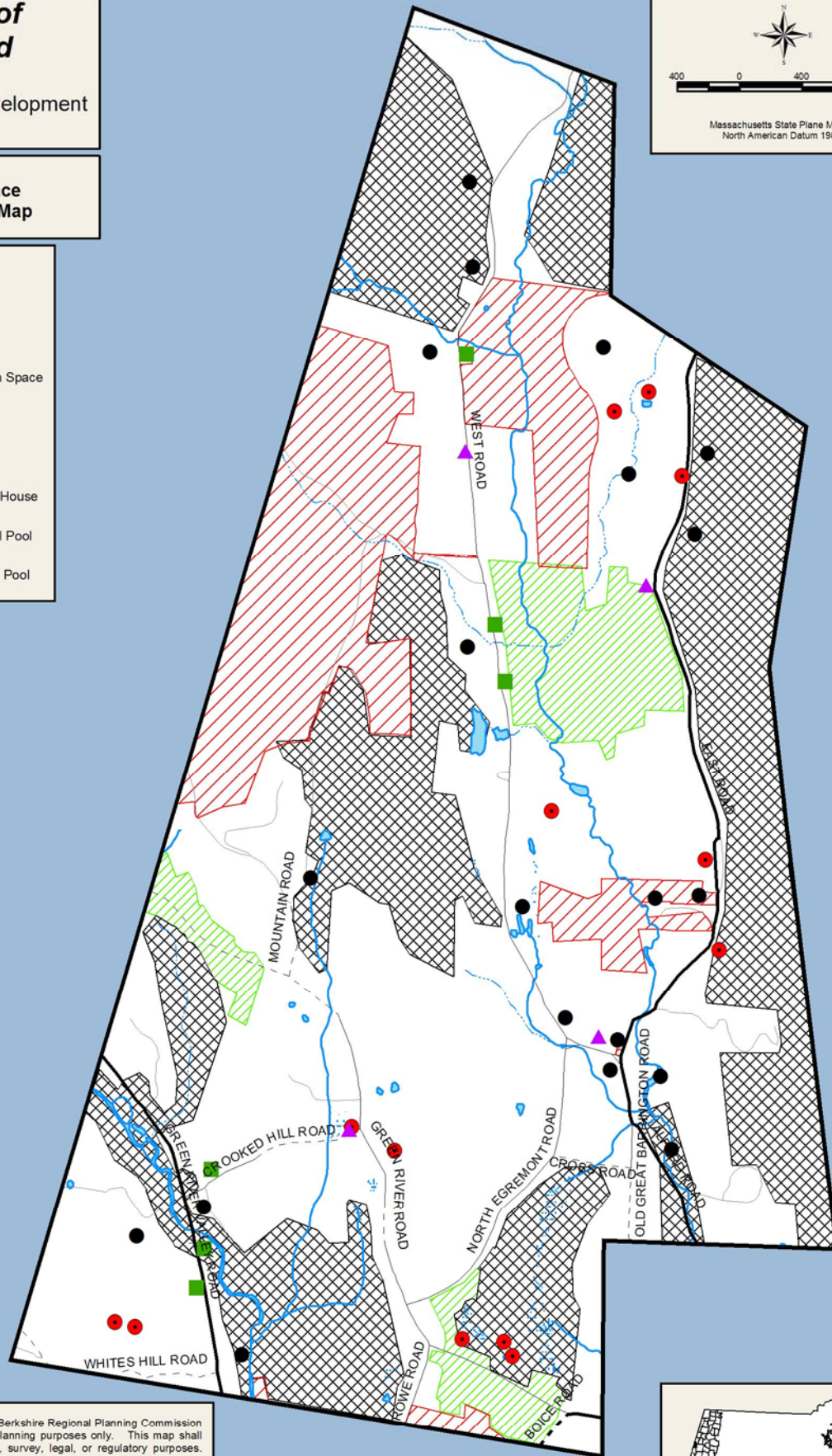
Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Open Space Suitability Map

Action Areas

-  Agricultural
-  Ecological
-  Protected Open Space
-  Historic Site
-  Farm
-  Former School House
-  Potential Vernal Pool
-  Certified Vernal Pool

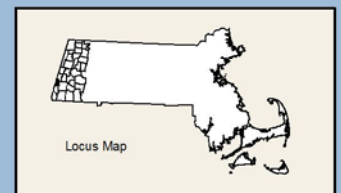


This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



June 10, 2004
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Housing



Housing

Introduction to Housing
Housing Element Report
Housing Suitability Map

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Introduction to the Housing Element



Housing element for the Town of Alford includes an inventory of housing supply, anticipated demand and analysis of affordability. This element provides documentation and analysis of a wide range of housing data and provides a number of recommended local actions to promote affordable housing opportunities in the Town of Alford. The data presented includes discussion of local and regional demographics, economic issues such as assessed values, market values and property taxes, housing tenure, housing age and condition, vacancy rates, rental housing availability, rental costs and other relevant information. A market based affordability gap analysis is also provided.

**Community Development Plan
2004 Housing Element
Alford, Massachusetts**

Current Housing Stock

The Town of Alford is a rural community of 399 year-round residents and 179 year-round households¹ located in southern Berkshire County. The town remains largely agricultural and residential with a rapidly increasing number of seasonal/part-time residences. Of the Town's 329 housing units, 324 (98.5%) are single-family homes. There are four multi-family housing units (1.2%), one mobile home and no condominiums.¹ Most of the development in Town is in the agricultural residential district. Housing is sparsely scattered along the roadways throughout the town, and the village center is the only area that is more densely settled.

New housing production seemed to peak in the nineteen years between 1960-1979 with 91 new homes built in Alford during that span, this reflects an average of about 4.78 homes per year. Production tapered off during the next twenty year span with only 68 new homes constructed between 1980 and 2000, this reflects an average of about 3.4 homes a year.

Alford's housing stock increasingly reflects the large influence of seasonal residents, as 38% of all homes in town are seasonal homes. (See Table 1) Data from 1990 to 2000 suggests a moderate increase (5.4%) in year-round homes and a significant increase (23.2%) in seasonal homes. The number of rental units in the town dropped slightly (2.4%) over the last decade and the total housing stock remained virtually unchanged in the last decade. The single most significant change in housing tenure over the last decade was in the number of year-round homes being left vacant. In 1990 10% of Alford homes were in this category, now the vacancy rate is virtually non-existent (.01%). With the exception of the rental unit data, all of the data demonstrates increasing demand for housing in Alford, particularly seasonal housing. This may help explain the significant burst in local housing production over the last three (3) years.

Since the time of 2000 census, Alford has issued a steady number of annual building permits for construction of new residences. A total of 38 permits for new home construction were issued between 1998 and 2003. This amounts to nearly 10% of the town's entire housing stock. During this same time period the Total Assessed Value (TAV) for the Town rose from nearly \$86 million to more than \$122.4 million. This gain of \$36 million represents a 42% increase in TAV in just six years. While this increase in valuation is attributable to a number of factors including improvements to existing properties, appreciation of existing real estate and personal property, and triennial revaluation- the construction of new homes is likely the most significant factor affecting the increase. It is also notable that Alford has an Equalized Valuation (EQV) per capita of \$260,241 (2002). This ranks the town 15th in terms of highest EQV in the Commonwealth. The "affordable" purchase price for a median income household in accordance with the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) *Instructions for Completion of FY2003 Request for Housing Certification* is \$220,994 for Alford.

Table 1: Housing Occupancy

	2000	1990	% Change 1990-2000
Seasonal	106 (38%)	86 (31%)	+ 23.2 %
Owner-Occupied	158 (57%)	146 (53%)	+ 5.4 %
Rental	13 (5%)	17 (6%)	- 2.4 %
Vacant Units*	2 (.01%)	28 (10%)	-92.8 %
Total Housing Stock	279	277	+7 %

*Vacant Units Not Including Seasonal Units

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census SF-1 Data

Table 2: Building Permits Issued for Construction of New Single Family Residences¹

Year	Total # of Permits	# Valued under \$250K	# Valued over \$250K	AVG Value of New Home
1998	8			
1999	6			
2000	11			
2001	0			
2002	7			
2003	6			

Sources:

1999-2004 Data: Town of Alford Assessor's Office ,

Constraints to Housing Development

Housing development in Alford is limited by a lack of infrastructure and a number of other of physical and regulatory constraints. At the time (2000) when the original build-out analysis was completed, Alford had the least amount (3% of town's total land area) of permanently protected open space in the Berkshire region. In the last few years, significant tracts of land have been permanently protected and now about 13% of the town's total land area is protected from development. After considering current land use and absolute and partial constraints such as, steep slopes, river protections areas, wetland buffer, floodplains etc., approximately 2455 acres, or 34% of the Town's land area is potentially buildable and zoned for residential uses. Alford has no municipal utilities such as water and sewer, making development more expensive than other less remote areas with existing public utilities and infrastructure. Alford has a single Residential/Agricultural zoning district. For single-family new construction the zoning by-laws require lots that are a minimum of two acres, which is a common size for rural communities in Berkshire County. Two-family homes require a minimum lot area of 4 acres and a special permit. Multi-family housing is not permitted. The zoning by-laws also allow for accessory apartments by special permit.

Population & Income

According to the 2000 US Census Alford's year round population is 399, which is a 4.5% decrease from 1990 and demonstrates a reduction in population to a level near that in 1980. The population of increased steadily from the 1970-1990's, but has dropped off this last decade. The Town experienced a 26% decrease in residents 65 and over, and 22% decrease in the youngest age cohort of people 0-24. The only age cohort to increase in numbers was the working age of 25-64, which went up by 14.5%. However, according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the net average of membership pupils(school age children in the school system) from Alford has averaged about 48 students a year between the years of 1995 and 2001.

The 2000 median household income in Monterey was \$49,632, which was 27.4% higher than the average Berkshire County household income of \$39,047. Based on countywide figures, approximately 28% of the town's households were considered low or moderate-income households, earning up to 80% of the median household income (\$31,238). Census Data indicates that 3 families in town were determined to be below the poverty level in 2000 (based on income x family size).

Local Housing Needs

Alford's housing needs are tied to the needs of the surrounding region of Berkshire County. The sluggish regional economy has reduced demand for new year round housing, but it is anticipated that the demand for high-end seasonal housing and affordable housing will increase. Alford does not have any housing units that would qualify as "affordable" pursuant to Chapter 40B regulations, though there are approximately 51 low-moderate income households currently living in town that may qualify for some type of public housing subsidy. The 2000 US census indicated that 16 individuals and 3 families in Town's are considered impoverished (household income below \$10,000/per annum). However, there are no families in Alford that receive Section 8 vouchers or are on the waiting list for a unit to rent with a Section 8 subsidy voucher. The 2000 U.S. Census data also indicates that 111 persons (28% of the Town's entire population) in the Town have indicated that they have a disability. The federal government categorically presumes that the elderly, persons with severe disabilities and migrant farm workers are "low and moderate income" and therefore eligible for public subsidies. Census data indicates that median monthly rents in Alford are well below the median for the county as a whole, however, the number of available rental properties in town is increasingly sparse amounting to only 5% of all local housing stock.

Typical to the region, housing sales data indicates housing costs continuing to rise. The median sales price for homes in Alford rose 58% from 1997 to 2003. The median sales price for a home in Alford in 2003 was \$370,250. In the housing profile (Appendix D) an affordability gap analysis was conducted and indicated that there are gaps in housing affordability at the low (14% gap) and moderate (9% gap) income levels. This means that some of the persons currently living in the town could not afford to purchase a home in town at the current prices.

Public Participation

The primary sources of public input used to develop this Element were the *Alford Community Development Plan Survey May-July of 2003* and public meetings and events that were hosted by the town's Community Development Plan Advisory Committee. The survey was developed by the Advisory Committee and distributed to all local residents of voting age. The survey asked 20 questions regarding the future of Alford, some of the questions specifically addressed housing development. The survey was mailed to 400 individuals and 150 responded to the questionnaire (see Appendix A for results). During the course of the CDP process many meetings were held where housing was discussed. On April 1, 2004 a public meeting was held to specifically discuss the housing data profile and housing issues in Alford.

The survey respondents indicated that housing is not a high priority for the Town. In fact, when asked if there was interest in seeing any more house developments in Alford, only a single respondent answered affirmatively. When asked to prioritize their concerns for the Town, housing and economic development ranked last among 10 categories of concern with only 23% of respondents indicating that housing was a local concern. Conversely, the primary concern listed by respondents was "inappropriate development" with 86% indicating this as an area of concern. When asked specifically if the Town should invest in developing affordable housing 62% of respondents answered negatively, 15% responded affirmatively and the remaining 28%

were unsure. A final question on housing asked if the Town should develop a “cluster housing” by-law, 56 % of respondents opposed this measure and 32 % were in favor.

The April 11, 2004 public meeting to discuss housing included members of the Town Community Development Advisory Committee and other interested residents. Following a presentation of the town’s housing data profile, the participants began discussing what they believed to be the Town’s key issues related to housing. Much of the discussion was focused on major subdivision projects that are under development in neighboring communities, such as Great Barrington, White’s Hill in Hillsdale, NY and Lee. It was evident to the participants that it is only a matter of time until a developer proposes a major project in Alford. It was noted that there are a few key agricultural parcels in Town that give the Town its essential character and flavor, and if even one of these parcels were to be developed into a housing subdivision this would radically alter the town’s aesthetic character. This led to discussion of the State’s Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit regulations and how these regulations could directly effect development in Alford.

Comprehensive Permit (Chapter 40B) applications are commonly used by housing developers in the eastern part of the state to circumvent local zoning regulations. Until recently, these applications were virtually unknown in the Berkshires. However, now there are 3 active 40B projects in the region and they are all in Southern Berkshire County. It was noted that since the Town, like many others in Berkshires, does not have a single housing unit that qualifies as “affordable” according to Chapter 40B, that the town could be vulnerable to large –scale development through the Comprehensive Permit Process. Most of the participants agreed that the production of local affordable housing units was itself a necessary and laudable goal, but the more pressing issue of local concern was being able to limit the town’s exposure to housing development that is not of an appropriate scale and character for the community. One of the ideas that was discussed included the development of an open-space-residential-district by-law (commonly known as cluster housing). It was noted that 2 communities in the region, Lee and Dalton, recently adopted these types of by-laws in an effort to balance housing development with the need to preserve open space and agricultural lands.

Another issue that emerged during the housing meeting and the economic development meeting was the need for housing of local agricultural workers. It was noted that some of the local farm operations employ full-time or seasonal laborers that require inexpensive, rental housing. Since the local availability of rental housing is extremely limited, and many of these workers are likely to work long, irregular hours and have limited access to transportation, it would be preferable for these workers to live “on-site”. It was discussed that the town may want to consider allowances for farm operations to develop on-site, affordable housing for their employees and to connect farm operations with organizations that could assist them in developing such housing. This type of housing would provide mutual benefit to the workers, the farm operators and the Town by; 1) providing affordable housing opportunities to the workers, 2) providing convenience and assurance of a labor force for the farm operator, 3) providing the town with affordable housing units that will count towards its Chapter 40 B inventory. There are some local models for this approach and Gould Farm in Monterey, MA is currently proposing a project to expand and develop on-site affordable housing for farm staff and employees.

There are a significant number of older homes in Alford and some of the homes require repairs, rehabilitation, or improvements such as new roofs, new furnaces, electrical and plumbing upgrades and remedy of code violations. While the meeting participants did not view this as an immediate problem in Alford, they did acknowledge that eventually all homes need significant repairs and that many homeowners, particularly those with limited or fixed incomes may not be able to afford such repairs.

A final issue that was noted by the meeting participants is that if there is going to be affordable housing developed in Alford, it would be preferable that it be initiated and directed by the Town, rather than by external entities that may not have the Town's best interests in mind. Many small towns in the region have expressed similar inclinations to maintain control of local housing development and to develop local programs that could reflect local preferences. For example, providing assistance to persons that may already live or work in the Town to be able to buy a home in town, or to improve/rehabilitate their home. Some of the items that were discussed as ways of developing local means of assistance were adoption of the Community Preservation Act, which would allow for a separate local fund to be earmarked for affordable housing development, open space and historical preservation. Another item was the discussion of the development of a Community Housing Trust similar to the model used for local land trusts.

Issues, Goals, Recommended Actions

As a result of the analysis and public participation efforts the Town has identified the following issues, goals and recommended actions. These actions will form the basis of a local housing strategy designed to meet the specific needs of the community while supporting regional efforts for affordable housing.

Issue – Concerns with inappropriate housing development

- A number of large-scale housing subdivisions are being developed in neighboring communities and throughout the region.
- Town lacks appropriate infrastructure for major housing developments
- Desire to protect local agricultural and open spaces and town's pastoral quality

Goal - To ensure that housing opportunities and developments are consistent with the Town's existing infrastructure, unique character and balanced with preservation of open space and agriculture

Recommended Actions

- *Form an affordable housing committee* - or housing partnership to guide the Town's housing planning, production and rehabilitation efforts. If forming a new standing committee is not viable, this action can be accomplished in a number of ways: by a community volunteer, an ad-hoc committee of volunteers, or other individuals from Town who could serve on the board of a sub-regional housing non-profit; this action could also be delegated as a new function of an existing board, a subcommittee, or a local nonprofit such as a land trust.
- *Develop an Affordable Housing Plan* – this can be done locally, sub-regionally or regionally. Town's that have prepared and adopted an Affordable Housing Plan lessen their exposure to hostile Comprehensive Permit applications. A local Affordable Housing Plan is also a proactive measure that can strictly define how the town intends to meet its affordable housing goals and projects that are not consistent with the Plan may be rejected.
- *Consider the creation and adoption of by-laws that balance housing needs with concerns for open space protection* - a number of towns in the region have adopted open spaces residential districts, or cluster zoning by-laws and by doing so have been able to create new housing stock and protect open space all in a single project. In the absence of these types of by-laws development will still occur, it will just occur without any consideration for protection of open space.

Issue- Need for affordable housing opportunities for persons of all ages and income levels including persons of low to moderate incomes, elderly and persons with disabilities.

- Significant population of persons of low to moderate income
- Significant local population of persons with disabilities
- Cost of housing in town continues to rise rapidly and there is an identified affordability gap for persons of low and moderate income
- Rental housing is virtually non-existent.
- Town does not have a single housing unit that counts toward the Chapter 40B affordable housing inventory

Goal - Support the development of an appropriate mix of quality home ownership and rental opportunities that are affordable to persons of low, moderate, and middle-income, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Recommended Actions

- *Work with regional housing development agencies to seek Executive Order 418 Housing Certification and to prepare an Affordable Housing Plan.* These items are often necessary for eligibility for public funding for housing and community development projects.
- *Reduce local barriers to affordable housing* - periodically review zoning by-laws and permitting processes.
- *Begin involvement in developing affordable homeownership options* - and publicizing current publicly sponsored first time home buyers programs available from MassHousing and Lee Bank.
- *Consider the creation of a Community Housing Trust* - or other innovative programs to address local affordable housing needs.
- *Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act* - to finance future affordable homeownership options, historic preservation and open space preservation in Alford

Issue – Need for employee housing to support local agricultural enterprises

- A number of local farms employ year round, or seasonal farm laborers that are critical to the viability of their operations.
- Farm laborers typically work long, irregular hours and often lack personal transportation.
- Farm laborers typically require inexpensive, rental units in close proximity to their work place and seasonal workers typically request short –term rental agreements.
- Rental housing is virtually unavailable in Alford.

Goal – Support adequate and affordable on-site housing for agricultural laborers.

Recommended Actions –

- *Determine number of year round and seasonal farm laborers that are employed locally.*
- *Determine if there is interest and support among local farm owners/operators to develop on-site worker housing.*

- *Consider revisions to local by-laws to allow for on-site worker housing.*
- *Connect interested farmers with appropriate housing development and funding agencies to assist in planning, design and construction of on-site, worker housing units.*
- *Count any new worker housing units created toward Chapter 40B affordable housing inventory.*

Issue – Significant amount of aging housing stock

- Majority of homes in Town are over 40 years old, and many are much older.
- Older homes are likely to require significant maintenance and rehabilitation, i.e. need for new roof, furnace, siding, septic repair/ replacement, plumbing and electrical upgrades etc..
- Most low, moderate and fixed income households are unable to afford the significant costs associated with a major rehabilitation project.
- Homes that are not properly maintained become blighted and detract from the property values of the entire neighborhood and the community.

Goal - Provide support for the maintenance and upkeep of aging local housing stock

Recommended Actions

- *Identify and inventory aging or dilapidated homes in Alford that may be eligible for rehabilitation assistance.*
- *Consider local participation in existing homeowner rehabilitation assistance programs.* Funding for these types of programs can be secured and administered by the Town itself, or by regional or sub-regional housing development corporations such as Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, South Berkshire CDC, Construct, Inc., or BRPC.

Summary

The Town intends to support and facilitate the development of affordable housing to meet the needs of the community, and will take appropriate steps to implement this affordable housing strategy. The strategy is consistent with the approaches and policies outlined in the *Regional Plan for the Berkshires* to enhance the quality and quantity of affordable housing in the Berkshire region.

References:

¹ Alford Town Assessor's Office April 2004

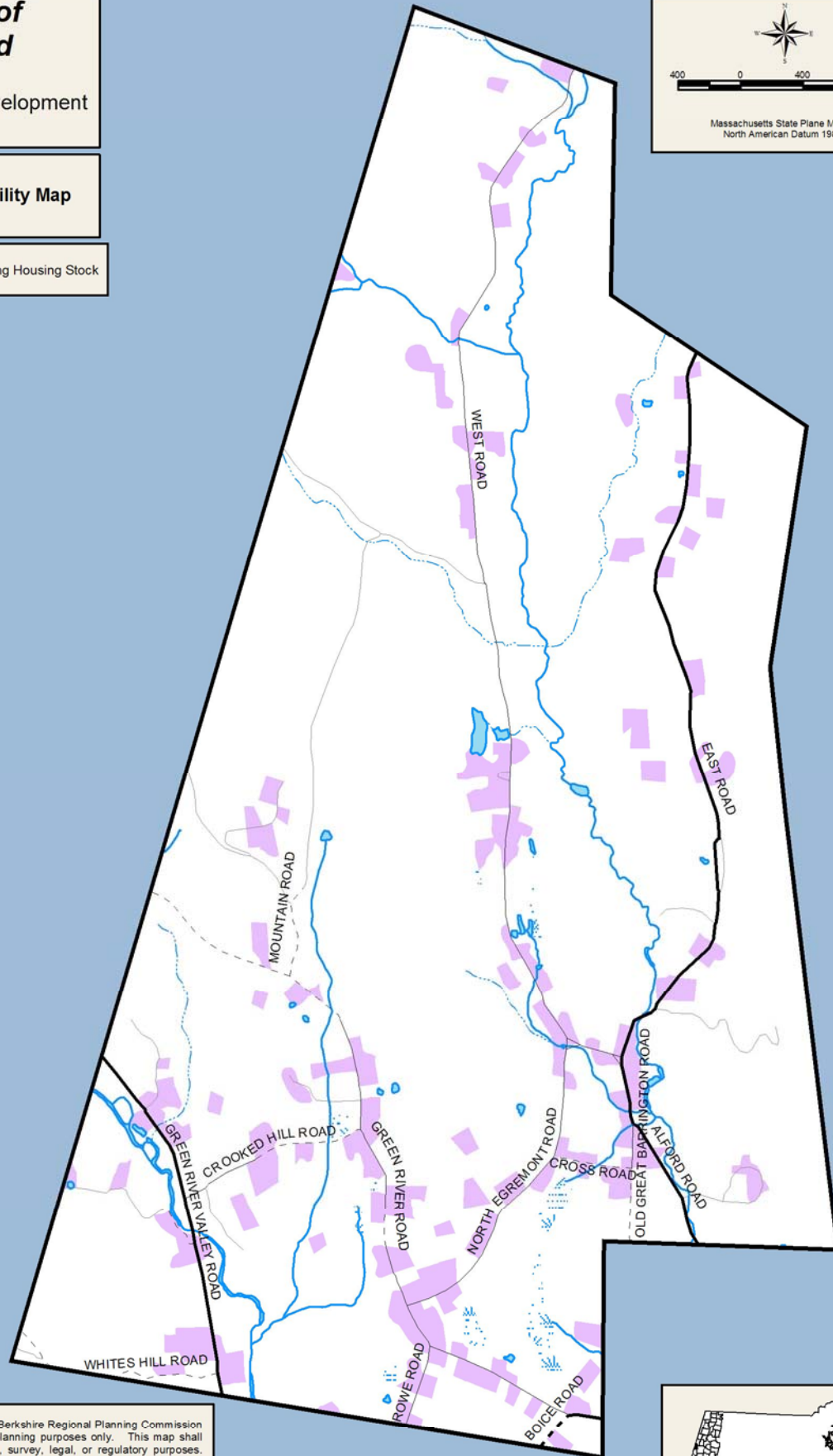
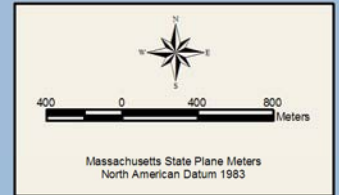
² Buildout Analysis, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 2000

Town of Alford

Community Development
Plan

Housing Suitability Map

 Maintain Existing Housing Stock

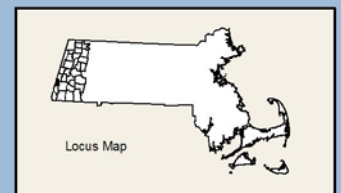


This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



June 10, 2004
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Economic Development



Economic Development

Introduction to Economic Development
Economic Development Report
Economic Suitability Map

6

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35

Introduction to the Economic Element



The Economic Development Element provides an economic data profile for the Town of Alford then focuses on a more detailed analysis of the Town's most prominent commercial enterprise, agriculture. This element provides socio-economic background data and a description of the existing economic conditions in Alford. The data and existing conditions are analyzed and discussed through narrative, photographs and GIS mapping products. The economic development element provides a summary of the Town's challenges and opportunities as related to economic development. Finally, a number of recommended actions to improve economic conditions in the Town are provided.

Community Development Plan 2004 Economic Development Element Town of Alford

Introduction

The Alford Economic Development Element was created as a result of a community-based effort to identify the Town's Economic Development needs and engage in planning to address those needs. Through the Massachusetts Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan process, BRPC researched and compiled an updated economic data profile for the Town of Alford. The profile includes extensive data covering number of local employers, employees, wages, annual payroll, household income levels, population characteristics, local tax information and a fiscal impact analysis based on various land uses (see Appendix C 2004 Alford Economic Profile). The information in the data profile was presented by BRPC to the Town of Alford's Community Development Plan Advisory Committee on February 5, 2004 and most of the data presented in this report is derived from the profile.

Following the presentation of the profile data, the Committee discussed the findings and proposed potential options for initiating local economic development activities. This Economic Development Element is compilation of information gathered from the data profile, input and analysis from the consultant, the Advisory Committee and other residents of Alford.

Background

Alford's economic profile is fairly consistent with other small, rural towns in South Berkshire County. Like other small towns in the area, unemployment rates for people living in Alford have historically been lower than the County and Statewide averages. However, there was a spike in local unemployment in 2003 (up to 5.1%) which brought Alford up near the statewide rate (5.3%). Similar to many of the small towns in the area, the number of business establishments (11 establishments) and jobs (46 jobs) available in Alford is very low. The number of local jobs did increase by 51% between 2001 and 2003. The annual average wages for those employed locally also rose significantly during that time period from \$21,535 in 2001 to \$29,848 in 2003 this represents an increase of roughly 39% in two-year period. However, in spite of the increase in local jobs and average annual wages, people working in the Town, on average, still received considerably less than the county average of \$32,921. Of the jobs available locally, 65% are in the "service" sector and the remaining 35% are in the construction industry.

In terms of those who live in the Town but may work elsewhere, the change in median household income during the last decade (1990-2000) has increased by \$10,569 or 26%. Alford's median household income was also 27% percent higher than the county median. In spite of these dramatic gains, the Town still has close to 28% of its

households that are considered low-to-moderate income (LMI), i.e. they are making less than 80 % of the median income for the county. Also according to 2000 U.S. Census data, 3 households in Alford live below the poverty level (based income combined with family size).

A common characteristic of small towns in this sub-region is that commercial activity that is occurring is closely tied to scenic, recreational and cultural venues that sustain a small retail and service industry that is primarily based on tourism and recreation. This is somewhat applicable to Alford with regard to service related jobs, however the retail aspect of the local economy is virtually non-existent. In fact as the town describes itself on a travel website (www.epodunk.com) “..no stores, no motels or hotels, and not a single gas station.” Agriculture also plays a central and enduring role in the Town’s economy. Unfortunately, this role appears to be diminishing. There also appears to be a number of home-based businesses that provide various specialty services. The latest US census information indicated that 21% of Alford residents were “self-employed” it is likely that a number of these “self-employed” residents probably work from their home. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections on Alford’s economic challenges and opportunities.

Economic Challenges

Some of the general economic challenges are noted in the previous section, for example even though more jobs are being created locally there is still not much of an economic base. Also the local jobs that do exist, and have recently been created, do not pay very well and local wages are not comparable to the average wages for the County. A more specific economic issue is the Town’s overwhelming dependence on residential property taxes. Although Alford’s tax rates are among the lowest in the Commonwealth and the second lowest in Berkshire County, approximately 99% of local tax revenues come from residential taxpayers with only 1% coming from non-residential sources. The Total Assessed Value (TAV) of all property in Alford is nearly \$119.6 million, only about \$1.6 million of the assessed value is non-residential. While as long as local tax rates remain at the current low rate, this may not seem to be a critical issue. If circumstances were to change and local taxes were to begin to rise rapidly, the Town would experience pressure to broaden its tax base and shift some of the burden away from residential taxpayers. Some examples of circumstances that could result in rapid changes to the local tax rate include: significant increases in education costs, construction or major improvements to public facilities, other big-ticket capital expenses (e.g. purchase of emergency vehicles, snow plows etc...), and significant reductions in state aid.

Another important challenge affecting economic development in Alford is that the community does not generally support local commercial development as indicated in the 2003 Town Survey, which had over 150 respondents. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents indicated that they liked the way the town is now, but would not be opposed

to some local development. However, when asked specifically about “commercial” development, less than a fraction of one percent (1%) indicated support. When asked what the top concerns are for Alford, economic development and housing ranked last of eleven categories, with only about 23% of respondents indicating that these issues were important to the Town’s future. The issue of greatest concern to the respondents was “inappropriate development” with 86% indicated that this was concern.

With regard to “commercial development” a similar theme was echoed in the discussions with the Town’s CDP Advisory Committee. The comments at the economic development meeting held on February 5, 2004 emphasized a desire to retain the few businesses that currently exist in the Town, but not to encourage additional commercial, particularly, retail development. Members of the Committee noted that retail goods and services are readily available in the Town of Great Barrington, which is about a 10-15 minute drive away from the Town of Alford. While typically having everyday goods and services, such as food, gas and health care services this far away is considered a significant inconvenience, the persons on the Committee said that it is not viewed as such in Alford. It was noted that the trade-off of relative peace and pastoral existence for commercial convenience was one of the primary considerations for residing in Alford. The two exceptions to this trend away from locally based commercial enterprises are home-based businesses and agricultural enterprises. These two items are discussed in the following section.

A final challenge that faces Alford (as well as most of the smaller, rural communities in the area) in terms of economic development is the lack of infrastructure and appropriate zoning for commercial enterprises. Alford does not have a public sewer or water system. The Town is not readily accessible to the interstate highway system or the rail network. Cell phone coverage and high-speed Internet access in the area is also somewhat unreliable. This factor is not only a deterrent to conventional businesses, but more acutely affects small and home-based businesses. Small-scale and micro-businesses often rely heavily on the Internet and telecommunications for various aspects of their enterprise including marketing, purchasing, sales, and distribution. Once again, typical to most towns in the area of similar size and composition, Alford only has a single zoning district, which is Residential/Agricultural with some “light commercial” uses allowed by special permit. Also as an accessory use, some home-based business activities are allowed by right and others by special permit.

Opportunities

In spite of the local economic challenges, there are also potential opportunities for economic growth. Some of these opportunities are related to economic and demographic factors that provide a favorable climate for enterprise development in

Alford. For example, the price of land is less expensive in Alford relative to other major metropolitan areas in near proximity, i.e. Greater Boston, Greater New York and some areas of Greater Albany. The same applies to property tax rates. Alford has a single tax rate for all properties, i.e. there is not a separate “commercial” tax rate as in most urbanized areas. As noted, the tax rate is far lower than many other neighboring areas in the county and statewide. For example, the tax rate of \$15.50 (2002) in Lee and \$15.62 (2002) in Great Barrington is about 235% higher than the rate of \$6.55 (2002) in Alford. The commercial tax rate of \$30.33(2002) in Boston is about 462% higher than the rate in Alford. The property tax rate in Albany is \$35.11(2002) is 540% higher than the rate in Alford. Though tax rates are usually not a primary deciding factor of where to locate a business, tax rates certainly are one of the factors affecting the decision. Of course the lower the tax rates, the more attractive this factor becomes to potential businesses.

The fact that the Town allows for home-based businesses as an accessory use is an economic opportunity that it appears is being actively utilized in Alford. To reiterate, according to year 2000 census data, 21% of local residents are self-employed and it is likely that many of these employer/employees operate home-based businesses within the Town. This figure is nearly triple the rate of self-employed workers in the County as whole, of which only 8% are self-employed. The steady increase in affluent, seasonal and second-homeowners also appears to be an emerging market for a variety of locally based retail and specialty services.

Another positive factor influencing potential for economic growth is the level of educational attainment of local residents. Of Town residents over the age of 25, nearly 97% have a high school education- this is 12 percentage points above the County average. More dramatic is the fact that nearly 52% percent of local residents have a bachelor’s degree; this is double the percentage for the County. Level of education of the local workforce is one of the key factors influencing the decision of where businesses choose to locate.

There is strong community support for preserving and expanding local farm operations in Alford. The Town Survey indicated that 93% of respondents felt strongly about preserving its working farms. The survey also indicated that the loss of farm land was the second greatest concern facing the Town, just behind the issue of “inappropriate development”. There are approximately 1500 acres of land in Alford that are considered “agricultural” in terms of land use and this represents about 20% of all town land. However, there are only a few viable farm operations left within the Town. Based on information from the Advisory Committee members that attended the February 5, 2004 economic development meeting, these are the major farm operations that are still active in Alford:

Farm Name	Acreage	Primary Crop, Commodity or Use
Dunn Farm	162	Hay, forage
Shepard Farm	170	Dairy
Wilcox Farm	340	
Scribner Brook Farm	170	Dairy
Springstube Farm	410 (West Stockbridge)	Hay, mixed livestock

Reference Appendix: B - Five Family Farms

Anecdotal information provided by the Committee indicated that all of the farms are locally owned and operated and all are family-run. The number of people that are employed by all five of the farm operations is estimated to be less than 40 and this figure includes working family members. It was noted that at least one of the farms appears to be run solely by family members. Based on the discussion with the Committee, nearly all of the existing operations are in various stages of transition. The Committee indicated that the anticipated intent of all of the farm owners is to ensure that their property remains a working landscape and is not developed for non-agricultural purposes. Scribner Brook Farm has been in an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) agreement with the Commonwealth since 1982. Scribner Brook Farm practices an innovative grazing technique known as “high intensity rotational grazing” that is purported to reduce environmental impacts of conventional grazing and grain feeding techniques.

Public Input and Goal Development

The primary sources of public input used to develop this Element were the Alford *Community Development Plan Survey May-July of 2003* and public meetings and events that were hosted by the town’s Community Development Plan Advisory Committee. The survey was developed by the Advisory Committee and distributed to all local households. The survey asked 20 questions regarding the future of Alford, a number of questions specifically addressed agriculture and commercial development. The survey was mailed to 400 households and 150 responded to the questionnaire (see Appendix A for the results). On January 25, 2004, the Chair of the Town’s Advisory Committee hosted a potluck dinner for local farmers to discuss agricultural issues. On February 5, 2004 the Advisory Committee hosted a meeting that focused specifically on local economic development issues and the Town’s economic profile was discussed in detail.

The key issues, goals and recommended actions that were developed as a result of the public participation process are:

Issue – Diminishing Agricultural Enterprises

- Agriculture is the Town's primary economic, cultural and aesthetic asset. The Town's existing farms are an integral part of the town's economy and heritage.
- There are still a few working farms in Alford that are viable but some may need additional support and assistance to sustain their viability.
- There is minimal local, or regional organizational capacity to support agricultural enterprises

Goal – Support the Preservation and Growth of Local Agricultural Enterprises

Recommended Actions

- Support local lands being put into Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Develop an Agricultural Profile for Alford, i.e. a detailed assessment and analysis of town's agricultural industry.
- Consider establishing a local, or regional Agricultural Committee, Agricultural Development Corporation or Farm Trust
- Educate community and the region on the importance of agriculture to the local economy and character, i.e. host locally sponsored workshops, forums, farmer's market, food festivals
- Identify farm owners and operators that may need additional community support and assistance to remain viable
- Identify residents or organizations that are interested in cultivating local farmlands and initiating agricultural enterprises.
- Connect identified farmers and potential farmers with support organizations that can provide organizational and technical assistance to existing farm owners and operators to maintain viable agricultural enterprises, and fledging farm enterprises
- Connect local farmers public with rural/agricultural development programs and funding sources and support local applications for funding
- Support the creation of non-traditional agricultural development models – e.g. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), specialty crops or niche farming, agri-tourism
- Foster partnerships and working relationships with existing regional agricultural organizations such as Berkshire Grown, Natural Heritage Breeds Conservancy, Eastern Native Seed Conservancy etc...
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they are "farm-friendly" and do not pose potential barriers to responsible farm operations that would like to expand or start-up
- Consider allowing for the development of on-site housing for agricultural workers

Issue – Local Resistance to Commercial Development

- Virtually no commercial retail establishments remain in the town.

- There are minimal jobs available in the town, and most of the local jobs don't pay well.
- There is little local support for commercial, particularly retail development in the community.
- Absence of infrastructure in terms of public water, sewer, access to major transportation routes, and modern communications systems (primarily high-speed access and wireless capabilities)
- Lack of commercial development places entire local tax burden on residential taxpayers

Goal – Retention of existing establishments and limited growth of small-scale business enterprises

Recommended Actions

- Ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the community.
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they do not pose barriers to the type of commercial development activities that would be most suitable in Alford such as home-based businesses, cottage industries, and business related to agriculture, i.e. farm stands, agri-tourism etc.
- Support the retention of successful existing businesses including farm operations.
- Identify and support local establishments that are successful and may be considering expansion. Once identified, connect these businesses with appropriate organizational and financial resources (e.g. grants, low-interest loans, investment tax credits etc..)
- Explore means of improving local infrastructure and tele-communications system, particularly accessibility to reliable cell-phone coverage and high-speed internet

Organizational Resources

Below is a listing of regional organizations that can provide the Town with assistance in the development and implementation of economic and community development projects.

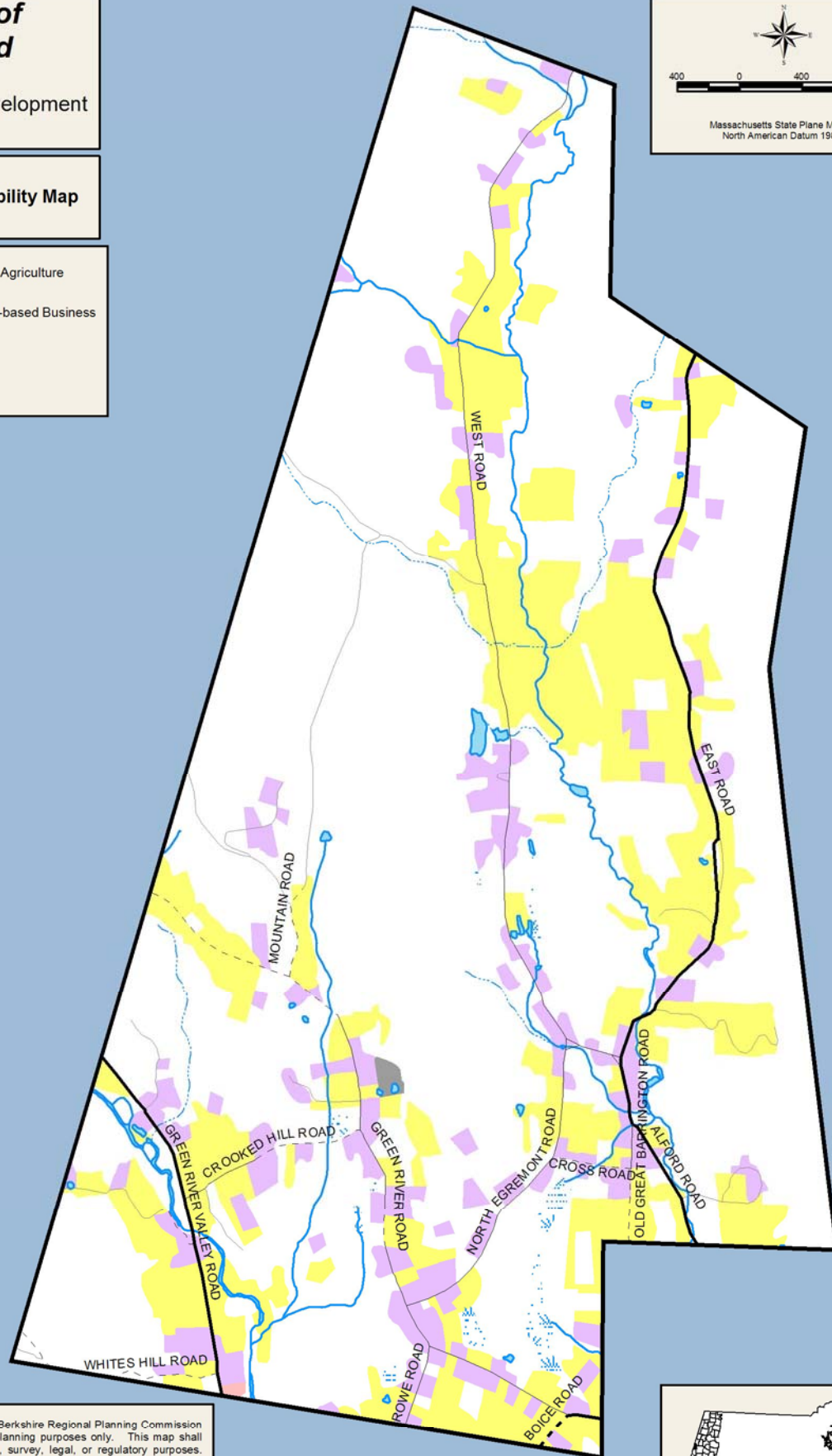
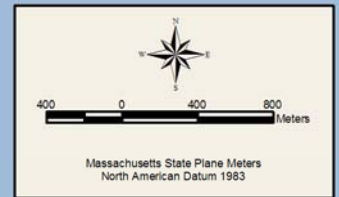
- o Berkshire Grown
- o Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- o Berkshire Housing Development Corporation
- o South Berkshire Community Development Corporation
- o Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation
- o Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Economic Suitability Map

- Retain Existing Agriculture
- Promote Home-based Business
- Mining
- Commercial

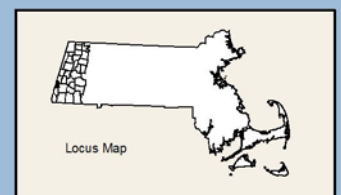


This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



June 10, 2004
/cop/alf/projects/economic_suitability.mxd



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Transportation



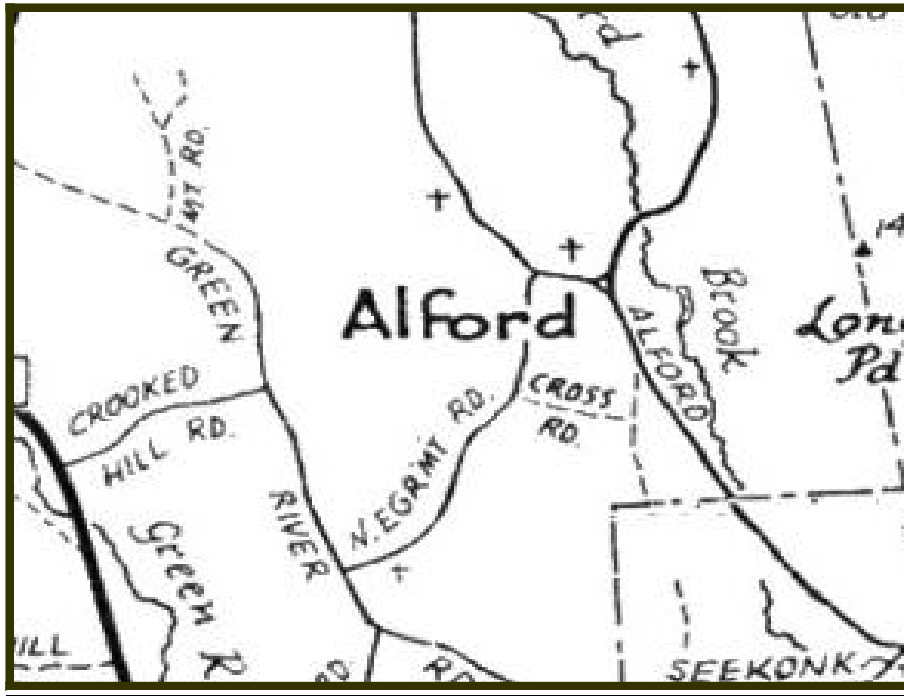
Transportation

Introduction to Transportation
Official Map Report
Official Map

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Introduction to the Transportation Element



The transportation element focuses on the creation of an Official Map for the Town of Alford. The official map, once formally adopted by a town, becomes a legal instrument that graphically delineates right-of way ownership, maintenance responsibilities and provides towns with guidance in determining frontage claims for the purposes of ANR development. The process for developing the map required extensive research involving various historic and current maps, registry of deeds searches, interviews and meetings with local officials and residents to determine current road status and classification.

The primary products that were developed as part of Official Map task are:

- Narrative Report describing rationale, procedural issues and substantive issues related to creating the Official Map
- The Official Map document (note that the Official Map is not effective until has been reviewed and approved by the local Planning Board and then formally adopted by Town Meeting.

Official Map Report

Town of Alford

2004



Prepared By

Berkshire Regional
Planning Commission

This document was prepared with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction/MHD, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Economic Development.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to document the development of an Official Map for the Town of Alford that identifies and classifies the status of roadways within the Town with respect to ownership, maintenance responsibilities, suitability for development, and eligibility for public road improvement funds. Inactive, “abandoned” and discontinued roads are also identified and evaluated. A large-scale Official Map, with a chart of all recognized roads and their distances, is included with this report. That Official Map, once adopted by Town Meeting majority vote, will serve as the legally authoritative document concerning the names, locations, distances and accepted statuses of all roads and parks in the Town of Alford. Copies of Alford’s Official map, if adopted, are to be placed on file with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), the Town Clerk of Alford, and with Alford’s Town Counsel, Lucy Prashker of Cain Hibbard Myers & Cook P.C. in Great Barrington, MA.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL MAP?

An Official Map is a map showing the accepted names, locations, distances, maintenance and liability responsibilities, and legal status or ownership of all roads and parks in a Town. This is a formal document, approved by majority Town Meeting vote and signed by the Planning Board, with legal authority under Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chap. 41, Sec. 81E-I.

As a formal establishment of the legal status of roads, an Official Map is designed to help a municipality understand and resolve the potential problems or inconsistencies in legal, geographical or historical records regarding its roads. In theory, once an Official Map is adopted by majority vote at Town Meeting it stands as a municipality’s presiding legal document in matters of road ownership, jurisdiction, maintenance responsibility, liability, frontage, public access, and related land uses. While Official Maps have yet to be extensively tested in the Massachusetts courts, they can provide a critical tool in a municipality’s land use control and legal planning arsenal. In the one case where an Official Map was challenged in a Massachusetts court over an issue of land development (Town of Warwick v. Rivers, 1994), the court ruled in favor of the municipality based on its Official Map.

When a Town adopts an Official Map it takes possession of a powerful legal and land use tool, but it also takes on an added responsibility for continuous monitoring of road status changes, which entails corresponding updates to the Official Map and reporting of the updates to the Registry of Deeds and the overseeing state agencies, namely the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Commonwealth Development (DHCD) and MassHighway. Table 1 (below) summarizes the benefits and responsibilities that come with adopting an Official Map.

TABLE 1. OFFICIAL MAP CONSIDERATIONS

BENEFITS	RESPONSIBILITIES
▪ Provides a tool for local land use control, particularly as related to ANR, subdivision and strip development. ▪ Provides a formal, authoritative graphic depiction of locally accepted ways and parks. ▪ Identifies ownership of all ways within a municipality. ▪ Establishes official road distances and functional classes, road and park layouts or locations, other characteristics	▪ A significant amount of effort and research are required to develop and maintain an accurate and meaningful Official Map. ▪ The map must be amended & updated, with public hearings before the Select Board, each time a new way is added, discontinued or modified (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81F). ▪ To be most effective, an Official Map needs to be reinforced by corollary actions such as the discontinuance of roads and local zoning by-laws. ▪ Requires updating and reporting to overseeing agencies if road and park characteristics change.

LEGAL STATUS OF ROADS TERMINOLOGY

In order to reinforce the status of roads shown on an Official Map, the BRPC generally recommends that Towns pursue separate corollary actions before the adoption of the Official Map. Many of these actions must be taken up by the Select Board and some may need to be approved at Town Meeting vote. Typically the actions requiring approval at Town Meeting can be laid out in a series of articles in the Town Warrant preceding the article calling for adoption of the Official Map. (See Example Official Map Warrants on page 33). These actions (described below and in Table 2) will make certain that the statuses of roads in question are clarified and on record before Official Map adoption.

Discontinuance by Town Meeting vote under M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21 completely ends the public right of passage along a road or way: the Town ends all legal responsibility for the road's maintenance and its liability for use. In most cases, the discontinued road can no longer serve as frontage or access for development of land abutting the discontinued road, including strip or frontage development and Approval Not Required (ANR) development under the Subdivision Control Law (Chap. 41, Sec 81K-81GG). Depending on the Town's zoning by-laws and subdivision regulations, new development *can only occur* along land abutting a discontinued road via the full subdivision approval process, which gives the Town much greater control over the proposed development. Discontinuance is thus an important tool in controlling 1) legal responsibility and liability and 2) growth management.

Discontinuance of maintenance under M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 32A is a relatively new law (approved May 27, 1983) and has yet to be extensively interpreted by the courts. BRPC's present understanding is that this action results in the cessation of the Town's responsibility for maintenance and liability for use of the road (so long as the road is adequately posted as not maintained), but the road remains a public way with a public right of passage, and with the potential for strip and ANR development. Discontinuance of maintenance in Section 32A is a Select Board action intended for roads that have become "abandoned and unused for ordinary travel and that the common convenience and necessity no longer requires said town way...to be maintained in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for travel...."

Statutory private ways are unique to Massachusetts. They are actually public roads, with public right of passage, but no responsibility by the Town for maintenance. Maintenance is provided by the abutters. This is a good option for the Select Board if it is unclear that the road in question meets the "unused for ordinary travel" requirements of M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 32A but the Town wants to end maintenance and legal liability obligations for the road.* In practice, the Select Board can recommend discontinuing the road in question by Town Meeting vote, and then lay it out as a statutory private way and recommend the Town vote to accept it as such at the same Town Meeting. According to a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling (*Casagrande v. Town of Harvard*, 1979), statutory private ways are not considered sufficient for public access under the Subdivision Control Act, and therefore cannot be used as frontage for ANR lots or strip development. It is up to local interpretation of Town zoning and subdivision regulations to determine whether statutory private ways meet the public access requirements for the full subdivision approval process. In some cases, statutory private ways may have to be laid out again and accepted at Town Meeting as full-fledged Town roads, with public right of passage and maintenance.

Laying out or altering ways is prescribed by M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 21. A Select Board can add or alter roads, either public roads with maintenance or statutory private ways without, that may not appear on any map or that may have been discontinued or discontinued for maintenance but that the Town now requires for "ordinary travel."

Table 2 on the next page summarizes the procedures required to enact these various legal road actions.

* NOTE: Towns can re-establish maintenance of a statutory private way or a portion of one by town ballot vote (M.G.L. Chap 40, Sec. 6D) or by a Town-wide by-law (M.G.L. Chap 40, Sec. 6N).

TABLE 2. PROCEDURES FOR ALTERING LEGAL ROAD STATUSES

LEGAL ACTION	PROCEDURE
Discontinuance	1) Place a warrant article on the Town Meeting Warrant, following regular warrant article posting requirements (M.G.L. Chap. 39, Sec. 10) 2) If discontinuing a road before adoption of the Official Map, then the Planning Board must be allowed 45 days before the Town Meeting, if necessary, in which to comment and report to the meeting concerning the advisability of discontinuing the road in question (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81 G-I). After adoption of the Official Map, Planning board review is not required, though the discontinuance must be noted on the Official Map (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81H). 3) If the road in question is within 500 yards of an abutting Town, the Town of Alford must hold a public hearing, notifying the Select Board of the abutting Town and publishing notice of the hearing in a local newspaper. The Select Board of the abutting Town must also give written approval of the discontinuance. If after 90 days the abutting Town does not concur with the proposed discontinuance, the Town of Alford can request in writing that the Commissioner of MassHighway approve the discontinuance and proceed with the Town Meeting vote. No public hearing is required for roads more than 500 yards from an abutting Town. (M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21) 4) Vote at Town Meeting ▪ If the road in question was established by easement or if the road passes over Town land acquired for any purpose, a simple majority vote is required. (M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21) ▪ If the road in question was established by eminent domain vote, and the land under it acquired in fee by eminent domain, the road can be discontinued by majority vote but the land must be “abandoned” by two-thirds majority vote (M.G.L. Chap. 40, Sec. 15), otherwise the right of way will no longer allow public access but a strip of publicly owned land will remain. The warrant article can combine these two actions, if the Town sees fit, and the land will revert to the abutters at the right-of-way centerline if approved.
Discontinuing Maintenance	1) The Select Board must call a public hearing to discuss the proposed discontinuance of maintenance and post notice in a local newspaper once in each of two successive weeks, the first publication not less than 14 days before the hearing. 2) The Town must notify by registered mail, return receipt requested, all property owners abutting the affected road. 3) After the public hearing, the Select Board determines that the road has become “abandoned and unused for ordinary travel and that the common convenience and necessity no longer requires said town way...to be maintained in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for travel...” (M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 32A) 4) If the Select Board approves the discontinuance of maintenance, the road must be clearly posted that it is no longer maintained and that travel is at an individual’s risk. The road does, however, remain open to public travel.
Statutory Private Ways	1) The Select Board can lay out a way as a statutory private way and bring it before the town for approval by Town Meeting majority vote, just like any other road. 2) In cases where the Select Board would like to cease maintenance responsibility and legal liability for a road but cannot reach the decision under M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 32A that the road has been “abandoned and unused for ordinary travel...,” the Town could vote to discontinue the road by Town Meeting vote and (usually in the succeeding warrant article) approve a Select Board layout of the way as a statutory private way, thereby relieving the Town of the obligation of maintenance but retaining public access. 3) M.G.L. Chap. 86, Sec. 1 requires the Town to install permanent markers at the termini and angle points of a road layout. Absent these monuments, a new survey will be required for the new laying out.

For a fuller explanation of legal road status procedures, refer to *Discontinuing Town and County Roads* by Lynn Rubinstein and Alexandra Dawson, Esq. published by the Highlands Communities Initiative.

NOTE ABOUT THE TERMS “ABANDONMENT” AND “CLOSED”

Under Massachusetts General Laws, the terms “discontinue,” “close,” and “abandon” do not mean the same thing legally. As described above, discontinuance ends the public right of access along a road; the right-of-way ceases to exist legally and all land uses requiring public access along that discontinued portion of the road, such as Approval Not Required (ANR) subdivision development, disappear. In cases where the term “closed” is used, it is assumed that the term was intended to mean more or less the same thing as “discontinue”—that is, the cessation of legal public right of access. But it must be stipulated that Massachusetts General Laws do not define “closed” as they do “discontinued,” and therefore the designation “closed” may be subject to legal challenge. “Abandonment” likewise has no official definition in Massachusetts General Laws. Though the Town of Alford may have voted at past Town Meetings to “abandon” roads, the Town has, according to current Massachusetts statutes, taken an indefinite, potentially challengeable legal position on the status of those roads. BRPC turned up several letters in Town records between former Select Board Chair Gustav Berkel, Jr. and former Town Counsel Sidney Q. Curtiss addressing this very question. Figures 1 and 2 (next pages) provide an example of the correspondence.

In most cases, the intent of the abandonment was most likely either to cease the Town’s responsibility for maintenance along a road or part of it or to discontinue the right of way altogether. As described above, M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 32A requires that the Town vote to “discontinue maintenance” for roads that the Select Board has deemed “abandoned and unused for ordinary travel...” Where the Town intended to cease both maintenance and the public right of passage, M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21 requires that the Town vote to “discontinue” a Town way. The term “closed” does not appear in Massachusetts General Laws and should therefore not be used in establishing official road status changes.

OF NOTE...

The Boston Globe has reported cases in other Massachusetts towns, notably Marshfield, where developers are actively seeking roadways that may be unused, or “abandoned,” but that were never legally discontinued. Developers have claimed that such roads provide legitimate access for “approval not required” subdivisions, which a Planning Board must endorse so long as local zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations are met, as laid out in the Subdivision Control Law. “Abandoned” roads in Alford may therefore present land use quandaries if their status is not clarified legally before a developer approaches the Planning Board with an ANR subdivision plan. Affirmative road status actions and adoption of the Official Map should, according to MGL Chap. 41, Sec. 81E-I, clear up the statuses of any roads in question. The Planning Board should refer to the adopted Official Map when assessing all future development applications.

Town of Alford

Re: Calkins Rd. **INCORPORATED**
1773
ALFORD
MASSACHUSETTS

FROM THE DESK OF: Gustav J. Berkel, Jr.
Chairman
Board of Selectmen

October 3, 1984

Sidney Curtiss, Esq.
Main St.
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Dear Sid,

Mr. & Mrs. Herbert S. Johnson have contacted the Selectmen regarding the status of the so-called Calkins Road, apparently they have a prospective purchaser for their property.

They inquired as to the legal definition of a "discontinued" road verses an "abandoned road" under Mass. law. Judge Donelan views, when he was Alford's Town Counsel in 1973 are incorporated in the Selectmen's letter of October 2, 1973.

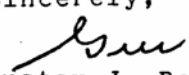
It appears that the intention of the townspeople was to "discontinue" Calkins Road-do you concur on this point.

After review of the attached may we have your comments on these points and you may wish to contact Mr. Jim McElroy, who represents the Herbert Johnson's in this matter as we would like to cooperate where we can.

The use of the phrase "passed" has always given me some concern, especially when one can be confused as to A) was it passed over - ie: tabled or B) passed by an affirmative vote - do you have any comments on this.

All of this points out our concern over these roads that have been discontinued or abandoned or a combination of both!

Sincerely,


Gustav J. Berkel, Jr.
Chairman

GJB/mmvd

cc: Selectmen
Planning Board

Attached: Oct. 2, 1984 letter - *being attached*

FIGURE 1. A 1984 letter from former Select Board Chair Gustav Berkel, Jr. to former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss conveys the confusion and frustration in distinguishing between "discontinuance" and "abandonment."

SIDNEY Q. CURTISS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
314 MAIN STREET
GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS. 01230

AREA CODE 413
TELEPHONE 526-0500

MAILING ADDRESS
P. O. BOX 65

October 9, 1984

Gustav J. Berkel, Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Town of Alford
RFD 3, Box 170A
Great Barrington, Mass. 01230

Dear Mr. Berkel:

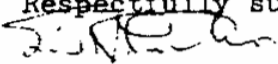
The words "discontinuance" and "abandonment" are used frequently interchangeably.

Technically, under our statutes town ways which have been legally laid out may be discontinued by vote of a town meeting (see Section 21 of Chapter 82 of the General Laws). When this vote is taken, sometimes the word "discontinued" is used and sometimes the word "abandoned" is used. The effect is the same.

After an affirmative vote, the municipality ceases to have obligations to repair and maintain the way and has no further liability to persons injured or property damaged as a result of highway defects. The easement over the land for public travel ceases and absolute title vests in the owner of the underlying fee.

When the terms "discontinuing" and "abandonment" are properly used, "discontinuance" implies affirmative action, and "abandonment" implies circumstances coupled with non-use over a long period of time and usually amounts to a cessation of use or enjoyment with no intention to resume or reclaim.

Respectfully submitted,


SIDNEY Q. CURTISS,
Town Counsel

SQC:hh

FIGURE 2. The reply from former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss draws a more casual distinction between "discontinuance" and "abandonment" than BRPC would prefer, but his conclusion effectively confirms the definitions given in this report and in Massachusetts General Laws. BRPC recommends that when the Town of Alford establishes the legal status of roads in advance of Official Map adoption (or any time in the future), the Town should vote affirmatively either to "discontinue" a road, the Select Board should act affirmatively to "discontinue maintenance" for a road (if it is found to be "abandoned," or "unused"), or the Town should vote to approve a Select Board layout of a road as a "statutory private way." Unlike "abandonment," these three terms are officially defined affirmative actions in Massachusetts General Laws, and using such legally recognized terms will avoid future confusion about the intent of legal status changes for any roads in the Town of Alford.

PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF ROADS

The BRPC presented the Town of Alford Community Development Plan committee, including Select Board Chair Chuck Ketchum, Fire Chief Stephen Berkel, Conservation Commission Chair Henry Flint, and Town Counsel Lucy Prashker, with a Town orthomap (see Map 1 on page 29), a high-quality aerial photograph of the Town of Alford depicting a GIS overlay of roads listed in the 2002-2004 MassHighway Road Inventory File (RIF), the latest edition. The roads are color-coded according to jurisdiction (e.g. MassHighway, State Forest, Town, Unaccepted or Unknown). The BRPC then compared the roads shown on the orthomap with roads shown on the last revision (1988) of the County Engineer's *Map of Berkshire County* (see Map 2 on page 30) and in the latest *Official Arrow Street Atlas of Western Massachusetts* (1998 edition; see Map 3 on page 31). All inconsistencies in location, distance, naming and status were cataloged. Several roads on the County Engineer's map were labeled "abandoned for use." Normally, the BRPC would verify the records of these road status changes by looking up any County Commissioners' Book and Page citations shown on the Engineer's Map at the Registry of Deeds in Pittsfield, MA. However, the Engineer's Map did not cite County Commissioners' records for any roads in Alford shown on as "abandoned."

INVENTORY OF WAYS

In preparing the Town of Alford Official Map, the BRPC assembled Table 3 (page 9), a comparative inventory of all documented roads and ways within the Town of Alford. The table gives a comprehensive overview of the status of all Alford roads known or identified in the following sources: 1) the 2002-2004 MassHighway Road Inventory File (RIF), 2) the County Engineer's *Map of Berkshire County*, 3) the 1998 *Official Arrow Atlas of Western Massachusetts*, 4) the 1989 Town of Alford Assessor's Map, and 5) Town of Alford records. Table 3 attempts to account as thoroughly as possible for discrepancies in road names, road locations, and road distances. Mileages shown in the table are derived either from MassHighway RIF data, from Town of Alford records, or from GIS digital measurement. Every road listing includes some road status description based on one or more of the mapping sources. Some characteristics (e.g. accepted road names, accepted road distances, specific locations or endpoints) were indeterminable from information available to BRPC. In some cases, clarifying the status of a road may require some official action by the Select Board or by Town Meeting vote or both (see Roads Requiring Clarification/Action on page 15). By design, Town Meeting approval of the Official Map should reinforce any action taken by Town boards and ostensibly resolve most, if not all, of the discrepancies in the records.

In preparing Table 3, BRPC staff consulted with Town of Alford Fire Chief Steven Berkel, DPW Superintendent Monte Green, and Assessor Tammy Blackwell. In addition to the printed version of Table 3 included in this report, the BRPC has provided the Town with a MS Word® version of the Table for ongoing updating or monitoring. The Table may be used as a running database of the legal statuses of all roads in the Town of Alford, and should be updated regularly so that it can serve as an effective tool of the Planning Board, Select Board, Assessor, Department of Public Works and Town Counsel, among others.

TABLE 3. STATUS OF ROADS IN ALFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 2004

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
Alford Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	1.06 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends NW from the Great Barrington Town line to an intersection with Alford Center Road and East Road; juncture with Old Barrington Road on the W. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 1.06 miles							
Alford Center Road (a.k.a. Main Road)	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	Shown as Main Rd.	Shown without name	✓		Town Accepted as Alford Center Road
	Status in Town Records: Extends W to E from the intersection of North Egremont Road and West Road to the intersection of Old Great Barrington Road and East Road. DPW Super Monte Green confirmed the road name as Alford Center Road. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Shown as Main Road. Town Accepted.							
Boice Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.20 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends S from Green River Road (between Rowe Road and Great Barrington Town line) to Egremont Town line. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.20 miles							
Boulder Road	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Not Shown	Not Listed	✓		Private Road
	Status in Town Records: Extends W, then NW, then SW from Green River Road (between Crooked Hill Road and North Egremont Road) to dead end. A private road. Status on Atlas Map: Boulder Road appears a secondary road (dashed lines).							
Crooked Hill Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.77 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends NE from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to Green River Road. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.77 miles							
Cross Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.38 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends W to E from North Egremont Road to Old Barrington Road. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.38 miles							
East Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	3.06 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends N from the intersection of Alford Center Road and Old Barrington Road to West Stockbridge Town line. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 3.06 miles							
East Road Approach	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	Shown without name	Not Shown	✓	Shown without name	0.04 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends E from the intersection of Alford Center Road and Alford Road joining to East Road. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.04 miles							
Fawn Lane	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Not Shown	Not Listed	✓		Private Road

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
	Status in Town Records: On Assessors Map, Fawn Lane extends S from Boulder Road to dead end. DPW Super Monte Green does not consider Fawn Lane a separate road; there is no road sign or any physical indication of Fawn Lane on Boulder Road. Currently, two residences use this way for access, essentially as a private drive. A private road. Status on Atlas Map: Fawn Lane appears as a secondary road (dashed lines) extending S from Boulder Road to dead end.							
Green River Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	3.07 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends W, then NW, then W from Great Barrington Town line (near Egremont Town line) to the New York border. Junctures with Boice and Rowe Roads to the S, North Egremont Road to the N, Boulder Road and Crooked Hill Road to the W, and Jay Lane to the S. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 3.07 miles							
Green River Valley Road (MA Route 71)	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	1.46 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends N from Egremont Town line, then NW to New York border. Junctures with Whites Hill Road and John M Dellea Road to the W and Crooked Hill Road to the NE. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 1.46 miles							
Harrison Calkins Road	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Shown as "Abandoned for Use"	Shown as Unknown	See Notes		Private Road ■ Consider voting at Town Meeting to discontinue and approving Select Board layout as a statutory private way
	Status in Town Records: Town records conflict almost incomprehensibly about the status of this road. A 1977 letter from Eugene Raisch to the Town of Alford Planning Board states that at that time the County Engineers deemed "Cakins Road...a 'Public Way' which has been abandoned for maintenance purposes only. [County Engineer] records indicate that the Town of Alford has never divested it's (sic) ownership in the Calkins Road to the abutters." A 1978 letter from former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss to Planning Board Chair Gustav Berkel, Jr. cites: 1) a March 15, 1926 Town vote to discontinue Calkins Road while allowing the Select Board the option of plowing the way for use by sleighs and wagons "in the winter"; 2) a February 11, 1935 Town Meeting vote to discontinue an unnamed road matching the description of Calkins Road extending W from West Road; 3) a February 14, 1938 article to reopen Harrison Calkins Road, which Town Clerk's records show as "Past"—that is, tabled—and therefore approved. An October 3, 1984 letter from Planning Board Chair Gus Berkel, Jr. to former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss raises an issue brought before the Planning Board by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Johnson: was Calkins Road discontinued, abandoned, or what? The town records do not conclusively show that Harrison Calkins Road is or is not a Town road, though it appears that at some time Town of Alford citizens voted to discontinue some portion of it. DPW Super Monte Green told BRPC that the way is not currently Town maintained and that it is effectively a private road currently owned by a man by the name of Margyles. Status in MassHighway RIF: Two separate portions of this way are shown as Unknown, one extending W and then NW from West Road to a dead end on the ridge and the other extending E from the New York line to a dead end on the other side of the ridge.							
Highland Drive	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Not Shown	Shown without name	✓		Private Road
	Status in Town Records: The Assessors Map shows Highland Drive extending E from East Road N of the intersection between Alford Road, Alford Center Road and East Road. A private road.							
Jay Lane	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Shown as Unknown	Shown without name	✓		Private Road
	Status in Town Records: Extends S from Green River Road (near New York border) to dead end. A private road.							

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
John M Dellea Road (a.k.a. John B. Dellea Road, Old Town Road, Dellea Road)	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	Shown as John B Dellea Road	Shown without name	✓	✓	0.20 miles	Town Accepted as Dellea Road ▪ Consider discontinuing name John M. Dellea Road, etc. and accepting way as Dellea Road
Status in Town Records: Extends NW from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71), just S of Green River Valley Road & Crooked Hill Road intersection, to dead end. The road sign for this way says "Dellea Road"; DPW Super Monte Green told BRPC that the Town maintains this way from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to the circular drive at dead end. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.20 miles								
Laurel Hill Road	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Not Shown	Not Listed	✓		Private Road
Status in Town Records: The Assessors Map shows Laurel Hill Road as a private subdivision road extending E, then S, then N from Old Village Road. The road may have been approved as a subdivision road but has not been physically built—that is, Laurel Hill Road is a "paper road." Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell told BRPC that the land for Laurel Hill Road is owned by a man named Reid Rubin.								
Laurendale Road	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Not Shown	Not Listed	Not Shown		Not Shown
Status in Town Records: Not shown in any Town records. An attendee of the January 2004 Official Map meeting of the Town of Alford CDP committee told BRPC that Laurendale Road was a private road providing access to 2 residences. DPW Super Monte Green, Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell, and Fire Chief Steve Berkel had no recollection of the way, and it does not meet the three or more residences threshold BRPC generally applies to private roads. If anything, Laurendale Road is most likely a name a property owner has given to a common driveway, but it is not deemed a private road for the purposes of the Official Map.								
Main Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	Shown as Alford Center Road	✓	Shown without name	✓		Town Accepted as Alford Center Road
Status in Town Records: Extends W to E from the intersection of North Egremont Road and West Road to the intersection of Old Great Barrington Road and East Road. A Town road accepted as Alford Center Road.								
Mountain Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.38 miles	Town Accepted from Green River Road to dead end N of fork to Old Village Road ▪ Consider accepting the fork leading NW to Old Village Road subdivision -or- ▪ discontinuing that fork and laying it out as a statutory private way

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
	Status in Town Records: Extends N from Green River Road, just E of Green River Road & Jay Lane intersection, to dead end. It is unclear from Town records and the Assessors Map whether Mountain Road includes the fork that extends NW towards the Old Village Road subdivision. Some residents of the Old Village Road subdivision construe that fork as a privately maintained portion of Town owned Mountain Road; some Town Officials construe that fork as Old Village Road, which then continues N and then NE to the subdivision residences. For the purposes of the Official Map, the fork to the NW should be called something other than Mountain Road or Old Village Road, and Mountain Road should be a Town Road extending N from Green River Road to the dead end just N of the fork leading NW to Old Village Road. Status on County Engineer's Map: Mountain Road is shown as a Town Road extending directly N from Green River Road, ending at a dead end. Two intersecting roads are shown as "abandoned for use," one leading E to a juncture with West Road and the other leading W almost to the New York state line. The "abandoned" road leading W is most likely the NW fork in question above. According to the County Engineer designations, it should be owned by the Town and maintained by abutters. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.38 miles							
North Egremont Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	1.37 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends S from intersection of West Road and Alford Center Road to Green River Road. Juncture with Cross Road to the E. A Town Road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 1.37 miles							
Old Great Barrington Road (Old Barrington Road)	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	Shown without name	✓	✓	0.51 miles	Town Accepted as Old Barrington Road
	Status in Town Records: Extends S from Alford Center Road (just W of Alford Center Road intersection with East Road) to Great Barrington Town line. Junctures with Alford Road to the E and Cross Road to the W. A DPW-installed road sign calls this road "Old Barrington Road." Town records show both "Old Great Barrington Road" and "Old Barrington Road." A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.51 miles Status on Engineer's Map: No name appears for this road in Alford; the road is shown as the northerly continuation of a Great Barrington road labeled Cross Road.							
Old Town Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	Shown as John B Dellea Road	Not Shown	Shown as John M Dellea Road	✓		Town Accepted as Dellea Road from Green River Valley Road to circular drive at end
	Status in Town Records: Old Town Road appears as an alternate name for John B. Dellea Road in Article XV of the May 16, 1995 Town Meeting minutes. In general usage, the way is known as John M. Dellea Road, or Dellea Road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.20 miles; in addition to the Town Accepted portion, the RIF shows an Unknown portion extending W then NW from just S of the circular drive that terminates Dellea Road. DPW Super Monte Green told BRPC that the Town does not maintain this extension.							
	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Shown as "Abandoned for Use"	Shown as Unknown	✓		Private Road
Old Village Road	Status in Town Records: Extends NW, then NE from Mountain Road. Right-of-way owned by Mr. Reid Rubin (see Laurel Hill Road); 8 private abutters pay maintenance dues to an "Old Village Road Maintenance Account," c/o Ms. Mary Ellen Foster, who disburses the funds to Mike Germain for road monitoring and repair. Some subdivision residents construe the fork leading NW from Mountain Road to Old Village Road as a privately maintained extension of Town-owned Mountain Road. (See Mountain Road.) For the purposes of the Official Map, BRPC recommends that Old Village Road be shown as a private road from the intersection of the fork leading NW from Mountain Road to Laurel Hill Road. The fork from Mountain Road to Old Village may be Town Accepted or may be laid out as a statutory private way with a name other than Mountain Road or Old Village Road. (See Mountain Road) Status on County Engineer's Map: The fork leading NW from Mountain Road is shown as an unnamed Town road "abandoned for use." No County Commissioners' Book and Page citation is listed.							
Rose Hill Drive	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Shown without name	Shown as Unknown	✓		Private Road

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
	Status in Town Records: Extends E from Alford Road, near the Great Barrington Town line; junctures with one driveway to the N, another to the S, and a third to the NE. The driveways to the N and NE meet to form a loop. A private road.							
Rowe Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.35 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends S from Green River Road (between Boice Road and North Egremont Road) to Egremont Town line. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.35 miles							
Tremont Drive	Private	Private Abutters	✓	Not Shown	Not Listed	✓		Not Shown
	Status in Town Records: Extends from Great Barrington Town line to dead end just south of Town line—the road itself does not enter the Town of Alford. Serves as access to two private residences, with driveways that cross the line from the Town of Egremont into the Town of Alford. A private road in . Status on Atlas Map: Tremont Drive appears only in Egremont, extending NW from Rowe Road almost to the Alford Town line.							
West Road	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	4.09 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends N from the intersection of Alford Center Road and North Egremont Road to West Stockbridge Town line. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 4.09 miles Status on Engineer's Map: West Road intersects four unnamed Town roads shown as "Abandoned for Use." The most southerly such road is shown connecting West Road to Mountain Road, the next such road to the N is shown connecting West Road to East Road and crossing Alford Brook, the next is shown extending W to the New York border along an unnamed tributary of Alford Brook (probably Harrison Calkins Road), and the last is shown extending W to the New York border parallel to and just south of Scribner Brook. At the northern end of West Road, the Engineer's Map shows the road forking, with the west fork designated a county road and the east fork a Town road. The portion that was once a county road is marked as "Abandoned for use" in Alford and its continuation in West Stockbridge is marked "Discontinued by Vote." A is given only for the discontinuance in West Stockbridge and not for the abandonment in Alford. As noted in the accompanying report, no County Commissioners' Book and Page citations are shown for any of the intersecting "Abandoned for use" roads.							
West Road Approach	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	Not Shown	✓	✓	0.03 miles	Town Accepted
	Status in Town Records: Extends NW from Alford Center Road, just E of the intersection of Alford Center Road and North Egremont Road, joining to West Road. A Town road. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.03 miles							
West View Road	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Not Shown	Not Listed	Not Shown		Not Shown
	Status in Town Records: Not shown in any Town records. An attendee of the January 2004 Official Map meeting of the Town of Alford CDP committee told BRPC that West View Road was a private road providing access to 2 residences. DPW Super Monte Green, Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell, and Fire Chief Steve Berkel had no recollection of the way, and it does not meet the three or more residences threshold BRPC generally applies to private roads. It may be the case that West View Road is one of the unnamed, "abandoned" Town ways that the County Engineer's Map shows leading W from West Road.							
Whites Hill Road (portion discontinued)	Town of Alford	Town of Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	0.66 miles	Town Accepted only from Green River Valley Road to Egremont line
	Status in Town Records: Extends W from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to the Egremont Town line. The minutes of the February 11, 1935 Town Meeting (see Article 9) state that the Town voted to "discontinue the highway that passes over what is known as Whites Hill from the lower entrance of the property owned by 'Foster' West to the New York State line. A Town road from Green River Valley Road to the Egremont Town line. Status in MassHighway RIF: Town Accepted, 0.66 miles Status on Engineer's Map: Extends SW from Green River Valley Road to Egremont Town line and continues SW then NW back to Alford Town line but not back into Alford.							

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

Name of Road	Owner of Right-of-Way	Maintenance/Legal Responsibility	Status on Atlas Map	Status on Engineer's Map	Status in MassHighway RIF	Status in Town Records/ Assessors Map	Actual Distance of Road	Official Map Status
Logging Roads in northwest of town	Private	Private Abutters	Not Shown	Not Shown	Shown as Unknown	✓		Private Roads
	Status in Town Records: According to Fire Chief Berkel and DPW Super Monte Green, these roads were built as logging roads, forming a large loop on what was once privately, individually owned property. As of the writing of this report, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) currently owns the property where these roads lie, and may be pursuing the transfer of the property to the state (most likely to the State Forest or to the Department of Conservation and Recreation). Fire Chief Berkel expressed interest in maintaining access for fighting forest fires and accessing accidents that may occur in the hilly, wooded recreation area. MassHighway RIF: Shown as "Unknown"; the western logging road extends W from the intersection of Old Village Road and the NW fork from Mountain Road, then N along the ridge to a dead end just about at the New York state line. The other logging road appears to be a continuation of Old Village Road N to a dead end just on the eastern side of the ridge, parallel to the dead end of the other logging road.							

✓ = Shown as listed; consult status notes for details

ROADS REQUIRING CLARIFICATION/ACTION

By adopting an Official Map, the Town of Alford should effectively resolve most, if not all, of its current road status questions. Because the legal certainty or durability of Official Map designations have not been thoroughly tested in the Massachusetts courts, however, the BRPC customarily recommends that the Select Board of a town adopting an Official Map take separate actions that will reinforce the status of roads shown on the Official Map.

Table 4 (below) details the clarifications or actions recommended for all Alford roads in question. Theoretically, the MGL statute that defines Official Maps (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81E-I) gives the maps legal precedence over all other road records, though the inclusion or omission of a way on an Official Map does not make it public or private or discontinue it (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81H). Thus, it is debatable whether the actions recommended in Table 4 are necessarily required to establish the official legal status of any of the roads listed; it is certain, however, that the actions *will ensure* the application of the road statuses shown on the Official Map provided with this report. It is at the discretion of the Select Board to act on any or all of these road status recommendations. As the descriptions in the table below make clear, the Select Board must generally initiate a decision and then bring it before Town Meeting (generally as an Article in the Town Warrant) for approval by majority vote.

TABLE 4. CLARIFICATIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

Road Name	Recommended Action
Alford Center Road (a.k.a. Main Road)	Consider voting at Town meeting to discontinue the name Main Road and, in the same Town Warrant article, approve a Select Board layout of the road as Alford Center Road. The Official Map shows the road as Alford Center Road.
Boulder Road	Consider voting at Town Meeting to discontinue Boulder Road and, in the same Town Warrant article, approve a Select Board layout of the road as a statutory private way. The Official Map shows Boulder Road as a statutory private way.
Fawn Lane	No Select Board or Town Meeting action required. The Official Map shows Fawn Lane as a private road. The abutters should consider posting a road sign at the intersection with Boulder Road indicating the proper name of the way.
Harrison Calkins Road	Town records conflict almost incomprehensibly about the status of this road. A 1977 letter from Eugene Raisch to the Town of Alford Planning Board states that at that time the County Engineers deemed "Calkins Road...a 'Public Way' which has been abandoned for maintenance purposes only. [County Engineer] records indicate that the Town of Alford has never divested it's (sic) ownership in the Calkins Road to the abutters." A 1978 letter from former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss to Planning Board Chair Gustav Berkel, Jr. cites: 1) a March 15, 1926 Town vote to discontinue Calkins Road while allowing the Select Board the option of plowing the way for use by sleighs and wagons "in the winter"; 2) a February 11, 1935 Town Meeting vote to discontinue an unnamed road matching the description of Calkins Road extending W from West Road; 3) a February 14, 1938 article to reopen Harrison Calkins Road, which Town Clerk's records show as "Past"—that is, tabled—and therefore approved. An October 3, 1984 letter from Planning Board Chair Gus Berkel, Jr. to former Town Counsel Sidney Curtiss raises an issue brought before the Planning Board by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Johnson: was Calkins Road discontinued, abandoned, or what? The town records do not conclusively show that Harrison Calkins Road is or is not a Town road, though it appears that at some time Town of Alford citizens voted to discontinue some portion of it. DPW Super Monte Green told BRPC that the way is not currently Town maintained and that it is effectively a private road currently owned by a man by the name of Margyles.

TABLE 4. CLARIFICATIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

Road Name	Recommended Action
	Consider voting at Town Meeting to discontinue all of Harrison Calkins Road from West Road to the New York line under M.G.L Chap. 82, Sec. 21 and M.G.L Chap. 40, Sec. 15 (see procedures above), which will require a two-thirds majority. In the same Town Meeting article, vote to approve a Select Board layout of Harrison Calkins as a statutory private way. Taken together, these actions will terminate any claim to Harrison Calkins Road as a "Public Way," alleviate any claim to Town maintenance or legal liability, and divest the strip of land from the Town to the abutters. One thing to consider before laying out the road as statutory private way is that that designation will force development fronting along Harrison Calkins Road from ANR into the full subdivision approval process. In practical terms, these actions will simply confirm the legal status already commonly applied to this way, while giving the Town perhaps an added layer of control over abutting development. The Official Map shows Harrison Calkins Road as a statutory private way. See Town records regarding Harrison Calkins on page 22.
John M. Dellea Road (a.k.a. John B. Dellea Road, Old Town Road, Dellea Road)	Article XV of the May 16, 1995 Town Meeting minutes appears to discontinue a road called "Old Town Road a.k.a. John B. Dellea Road." The 2002 MassHighway RIF still has the road listed as "Town Accepted," and DPW Super Monte Green told BRPC in June 2004 that the Town still maintains the way from Green River Valley Road to the circular drive at the dead end. If the Town does in fact intend for the way to be discontinued, no Select Board or Town Meeting action is necessary, except for notification to MassHighway that the way is no longer Town Accepted. If, on the other hand, the Town intends for the currently maintained portion of the road to be Town Accepted, the Select Board will have to approve the layout of the way once again. In this case, the BRPC recommends voting at Town Meeting to discontinue the names "John M. Dellea Road," "John B. Dellea Road," and "Old Town Road" for this way in order to avoid further confusion. In the same Town Warrant article, the Town can vote to accept the road as "Dellea Road" (as indicated on the DPW-installed road sign) from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to the dead end at the circular drive. The Official Map shows "Dellea Road" as a Town Accepted road from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to the dead end at the circular drive. See Town records regarding Dellea Road on page 26.
Laurel Hill Road	The Assessors Map shows Laurel Hill Road as a private subdivision road extending E, then S, then N from Old Village Road. The road has apparently been approved as a subdivision road but has not been physically built—that is, Laurel Hill Road is a "paper road." Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell told BRPC that the land for Laurel Hill Road is owned by a man named Reed Rubin and abutting subdivision parcels are owned by Mr. Rubin or by members of his family. The Town has a couple of options for dealing with "paper roads": 1) according to former Mass. DHCD senior land use planner Don Schmidt, the Planning Board can rescind the subdivision plan (assuming the road was created by the subdivision approval process and not by ANR subdivision) and re-approve the plan with the paper road removed, in which case the road will not appear on the Official Map, or 2) the Town can take no action, treat the way as a private subdivision road, and deal with development proposals fronting on the road as they arise; this leaves the possibility of ANR development. Because the Town of Alford has at some point already approved Laurel Hill Road as a private subdivision road (and thus approved the idea of future development fronting on the road), and because the way poses no new legal or maintenance responsibilities for the Town, BRPC recommends that it be shown on the Official Map as a

TABLE 4. CLARIFICATIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

Road Name	Recommended Action
	private road. The decision is, of course, at the discretion of the Planning Board. For now, the Official Map shows Laurel Hill Road as a private road extending east, then south, then north from Old Village Road.
Laurendale Road	An attendee of the January 2004 Official Map meeting of the Town of Alford CDP committee told BRPC that Laurendale Road was a private road providing access to 2 residences. It does not appear in any Town records; DPW Super Monte Green, Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell, and Fire Chief Steve Berkel had no recollection of the way; and it does not meet the three or more residences threshold BRPC generally applies to private roads. If anything, Laurendale Road is most likely a name a property owner has given to a common driveway, but it is not a private road per se. No Select Board or Town Meeting action is necessary. The Official Map does not show Laurendale Road.
Mountain Road	It is unclear from Town records and the Assessors Map whether Mountain Road includes the fork that extends NW towards the Old Village Road subdivision. Some residents of the Old Village Road subdivision construe that fork as a privately maintained portion of Town-owned Mountain Road; some Town Officials construe that fork as the beginning of Old Village Road, which then continues N and then NE to the subdivision residences. For the purposes of the Official Map, BRPC recommends that the fork to the NW should be called something other than Mountain Road or Old Village Road, and Mountain Road should be a Town Road extending N from Green River Road to the dead end just N of the fork leading NW to Old Village Road.
Old Great Barrington Road (also Old Barrington Road)	Town records show this way variously as "Old Great Barrington Road" or "Old Barrington Road." The DPW-installed road sign for this road says "Old Barrington Road." BRPC recommends the Select Board act to clarify the confusion. Consider voting at Town Meeting to discontinue the name "Old Great Barrington Road" and, in the same Town Warrant article, approve a Select Board layout of the road as "Old Barrington Road." The Official Map shows the road as "Old Barrington Road."
Old Village Road	This private subdivision road, owned by Mr. Reed Rubin (see Laurel Hill Road), provides access to 8 private subdivision abutters, who pay maintenance dues to an "Old Village Road Maintenance Account," c/o Ms. Mary Ellen Foster, who disburses the funds to Mike Germain for road monitoring and repair. Subdivision residents have construed the fork leading NW from Mountain Road, for all intents and purposes, as a private extension of Mountain Road (see Mountain Road above). Some Town Officials apparently construe that NW fork as the southern portion of private Old Village Road. The MassHighway RIF shows the fork leading NW from Mountain Road as unnamed with "Unknown" administration, and the County Engineer's Map shows that fork as an unnamed Town road "abandoned for use" (no County Commissioners' Book and Page citation is listed). The residents of the Old Village Road subdivision wish to have the Town re-accept maintenance and legal liability for that NW fork Mountain Road to Old Village Road. Apparently, that portion of road is built to acceptable Town codes, while Old Village Road itself is not. The Town can clarify the status of the NW fork between Mountain Road and Old Village Road in several different ways: 1) the Select Board can lay out that way as a full-fledged Town way with maintenance and legal liability ▪ This will effectively undo the "abandonment" shown on the County Engineer's Map, which ostensibly ended Town maintenance and legal liability but not Town ownership ▪ This may add some currently unaccounted for mileage to

TABLE 4. CLARIFICATIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

Road Name	Recommended Action
	Chap. 90 fund calculations. - BRPC recommends naming any newly laid out way something other than Mountain Road or Old Village Road 2) The Town can vote at Town Meeting to discontinue outright the NW fork from Mountain Road to Old Village Road and vote to approve a Select Board layout of the way as a “Statutory Private Way” (M.G.L. Chap 82, Sec. 21) - This will definitively cease the Town’s maintenance responsibility and legal liability without having the Town meet the burden of showing that the road is “abandoned and unused for ordinary travel” (necessary for discontinuance of maintenance under M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 32A), while maintaining public right of access along the right-of-way - This will reinforce the private abutters’ responsibility for maintenance and legal liability for use along the fork from Mountain Road to Old Village Road—a burden the abutters (or Old Village residents) may not wish to bear - This will force development along this right-of-way from ANR subdivision to the full subdivision approval process The Official Map shows Old Village Road as a private road extending N from the NW fork from Mountain Road to a dead end at the BNRC land and the NW fork of Mountain Road as a statutory private way. It must be emphasized that the final legal status decision for the NW fork is at the discretion of the Select Board, after appropriate public hearings and notification to abutters and others affected, and Town Meeting vote.
Tremont Drive	Various records show Tremont Drive as a private road leading from the Town of Egremont just over the Town of Alford line. Though the road does serve two residences just over the Town of Alford, only their driveways extend into the Town of Alford and not Tremont Drive. The residents are left with the irony of having Alford addresses on a road that does not extend into the Town of Alford. No Select Board or Town Meeting action is required. The Official Map does not show Tremont Drive in the Town of Alford, and therefore does not show the driveways of the two Alford residences at the road’s end.
West View Road	This road is not shown in any Town records. An attendee of the January 2004 Official Map meeting of the Town of Alford CDP committee told BRPC that West View Road was a private road providing access to 2 residences. DPW Super Monte Green, Town Assessor Tammy Blackwell, and Fire Chief Steve Berkel had no recollection of the way, and it does not meet the three or more residences threshold BRPC generally applies to private roads. It may be the case that West View Road is one of the unnamed, “abandoned” Town ways that the County Engineer’s Map shows leading west from West Road. The Town may consider voting at Town Meeting to discontinue the way shown on the County Engineer’s Map. The Official Map does not show West View Road.
Whites Hill Road	Town records show that the westerly portion of Whites Hill Road, from the Egremont Town line to the New York state line, was discontinued. The minutes of the February 11, 1935 Town Meeting (Article 9) state that the Town voted to “discontinue the highway that passes over what is known as Whites Hill from the lower entrance of the property owned by ‘Foster’ West to the New York State line.” The MassHighway RIF still shows this portion as “Town Accepted.” BRPC recommends that the Town notify MassHighway of the correct legal status, but no other formal Select Board or Town Meeting action is required, unless the Town wishes to. The Town accepted portion Extends W from Green River Valley Road (MA Rt. 71) to the Egremont Town line. A Town road from Green River Valley Road to

TABLE 4. CLARIFICATIONS OR ACTIONS REQUIRED

Road Name	Recommended Action
	the Egremont Town line. See Town records regarding Whites Hill Road on page 27.
Berkshire Natural Resources Council Logging Roads	The MassHighway RIF shows two “Unknown” roads in the northwestern part of the Town. The western road extends W from the intersection of Old Village Road and the NW fork from Mountain Road, then N along the ridge to a dead end just east of the New York state line. The other road appears to be a continuation of Old Village Road north to a dead end just on the eastern side of the ridge, parallel to the dead end of the other first road. According to Fire Chief Berkel and DPW Super Monte Green, these roads were built as logging roads, forming a large loop on what was once privately, individually owned property. As of the writing of this report, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) currently owns the property abutting these roads, and may be pursuing the transfer of the property to the state (most likely to the State Forest or to the Department of Conservation and Recreation). Fire Chief Berkel expressed interest in maintaining access for fighting forest fires and accessing accidents that may occur in the hilly, wooded recreation area. For the purposes of the Official Map and this report, these roads will be shown as private roads. There are several issues to keep in mind as the BNRC pursues transfer of the property to the state: 1) If the state takes over ownership, maintenance and legal liability of these roads as part of some agreement with BNRC, the Official Map designations must change to “Mass. DCR” or “Mass State Forest” or whatever the appropriate label turns out to be. 2) The Town must consider its own responsibility for public access to these roads and to the recreational area to which they will serve public access. The Town and the residents of the Old Village Road subdivision should come to an agreement so that the 8 private property owners in the subdivision do not bear the burden of maintenance and legal liability for roads providing the only or primary public access to a state recreational facility.

This road-by-road analysis should answer most of the questions about how roads, road names, and road legal status designations ended up on or off the Official Map and why. It also provides an action plan for resolving questions of road status in the Town of Alford and for clarifying inconsistencies in the record before adoption of the Official Map. It should be emphasized that if Town of Alford officials intend to take any of the recommended actions, they should act before the Official Map comes up for adoption at Town Meeting. Recommendations that call for Select Board or Town Meeting action provide much of the language Town officials can use when drawing up Select Board motions or Town Meeting warrant articles. (See Example Town Warrants for Discontinuing Roads and Adopting an Official Map on page 33.)

DRIVEWAYS / PRIVATE ROADS / STATUTORY PRIVATE WAYS

It was not always clear whether certain roads listed in Tables 3 and 4 should be deemed 1) driveways (and therefore left off the Official Map) or 2) private roads without public right of access or 3) statutory private ways *with* public right of access. There is no statutory definition distinguishing a common driveway shared between multiple residences and a private road providing access to several residences. The distinction is significant here because driveways do not appear on Official Maps, and private roads do, and generally driveways cannot provide frontage for ANR subdivision development, while private roads can, provided local zoning and bylaw requirements are met. As a general rule of thumb, the BRPC and other planning institutions treat ways providing access to three or more residences as private roads and not simply shared driveways. The Official Map must also distinguish between regular private roads, which are maintained and legally controlled by abutters while *restricting* public access, and so-called

statutory private ways, maintained and legally controlled by abutters while *allowing* public access (see definition above).

The recommendations in Table 4 should clarify the legal status of all roads in question in Alford, particularly private ways. The recommendations call for roads providing access to three or more residences, where the public right of access is restricted, to be shown on the Official Map as “private roads.” In the cases where public right of access is unrestricted but the road in question is owned and maintained by private abutters, the recommendations call for the Select Board to lay out such roads as “statutory private ways” under M.G.L. Chap. 82, Sec. 21 and for the ways to be so designated on the Official Map. Ultimately, the decision to lay out a private way as a statutory private way is at the discretion of the Select Board and of Town Meeting voters. Table 4 simply identifies which roads in the Town of Alford make appropriate candidates.

OFFICIAL MAP FOLLOW THROUGH

Notifying Appropriate Agencies

When considering changes to road names and locations, Town of Alford officials should 1) task the municipal Department of Public Works to make corresponding changes to road signs, if necessary, and 2) notify the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Commonwealth Development (DHCD) and MassHighway of all road status changes. The measures recommended in Table 4 above and the statuses shown on the Official Map will really only be effective if road signs and road maps produced by other agencies are changed accordingly. In compliance with Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan regulations, the BRPC has provided DHCD and MassHighway with a copy of the Official Map included in this report, but it is the responsibility of the Town to keep those agencies up to date on all matters related to road status and the Official Map. As stated earlier, it is also the responsibility of the Town to monitor and update the Official Map, once it is adopted, to assure accuracy and legal and administrative credibility.

Possible Zoning By-Law or Subdivision Regulation Amendments

During the Community Development Planning process, it came to the attention of BRPC planners that the issue of development fronting on roads of debatable legal status has been and may continue to be an issue in the Town of Alford for many years. The BRPC hopes that this report and the Town of Alford’s adoption of an Official Map will preclude much of the confusion surrounding such decisions. This is, after all, one of the intended purposes of the Official Map.

When the Community Development Plan advisory group met in January 2004 to discuss the Official Map project, Town Counsel Lucy Prashker asked BRPC staff about whether a way in existence when the subdivision control law (M.G.L. Chap. 41, Secs. 81K-GG) went into effect can satisfy the frontage requirement for an ANR approval purposes if, in the opinion of the planning board, the way is of “sufficient width, suitable grades and adequate construction to provide for the needs of vehicular traffic in relation to the proposed use of the land abutting thereon or served thereby, and for the installation of municipal services to serve such land and the buildings erected or to be erected thereon.” She added that that way need not be a public way and it need not be a way shown on a subdivision plan. BRPC staff have subsequently confirmed that this is true, according to M.G.L. Chap. 41, Sec. 81M, so long as local zoning requires nothing more than “adequate access.” If development is proposed on a road that has been discontinued, the Planning Board can grant building permits for lots fronting on the way *so long* as the local ordinances governing frontage requirements—that is, zoning by-laws or local subdivision regulations—do not require frontage on a “public way” and the way in question provides adequate access for emergency vehicles.*

* According to the “Around the Commonwealth” column in the September 2003 *Beacon*, the Massachusetts Appeals Court ruled in July 2003 that public roads, including “abandoned” public roads, must be passable by emergency vehicles at the time of application for development on

In other words, Massachusetts General Laws give precedence in road-related development decisions to local zoning by-laws and subdivision regulations and places the decision to allow ANR development in the hands of the municipal Planning Board, which must decide if a proposal meets the requirements of those local ordinances (e.g. sufficient width, suitable grades, adequate construction, etc.) Town Counsel Prashker told BRPC that the Town of Alford's current zoning bylaws define a street (on which there must be the requisite frontage) as including all the categories of Sec. 81L, including the "way in existence" provision. This means ANR subdivision development is still possible in the Town of Alford along discontinued roads or any way that may have been in existence before subdivision control, so long as the Planning Board deems those ways in compliance with the local frontage requirements. The Planning Board could establish greater control over strip or subdivision development in the Town of Alford if it amends the zoning bylaws to require sufficient frontage and adequate access on a "public way." This would make discontinued roads, which by definition are no longer "public ways," unavailable to ANR development and would force new development into the full subdivision approval process, over which towns have much more control. As Lynn Rubinstein and Alexandra Dawson, Esq. point out in *Discontinuing Town and County Ways*, however, "ANR is a commonly used development technique...that many small landowners rely upon for lower development costs of land. The full subdivision approval process can be quite lengthy and expensive. The ANR route is much quicker, simpler, and thus cheaper."

The Town of Alford Planning Board should amend its zoning bylaws *only if*, in the Board's thorough consideration, the benefits of greater development control outweigh the costs of greater development expense and administration.

Record Keeping

The BRPC recommends that Town of Alford officials attach to this report any Select Board decisions and Town Meeting minutes so that there is a clear and cohesive record of which recommendations in Table 4 were enacted and which were not. Included on the CD-ROM of this report is a MS Word® version of Table 3, which can be used by the Select Board, Planning Board, DPW, Assessors or any Town of Alford official to maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of the status of all roads in the Town of Alford. Table 3 and the Official Map should be updated in kind, whenever the status of a road changes.

REFERENCE

Dawson, Alexandra, Esq. and Lynn Rubinstein. *Discontinuing Town and County Roads*. Massachusetts Department of Public Works and the Highlands Communities Initiative, 2004.

abutting land. The court decision makes accessibility by emergency vehicles at the time of application the determining factor in denying an "approval not required" (ANR) endorsement, as outlined in the Subdivision Control Law (M.G.L. Chapter 81, Sections K-GG). Development of the land in question in Leverett, MA would have required the Town to rebuild a road no longer in use, a cost the Town did not want to bear.

**Town of Alford Records
Harrison Calkins Road**

September 19, 1977

Planning Board
Town of Alford
Alford, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

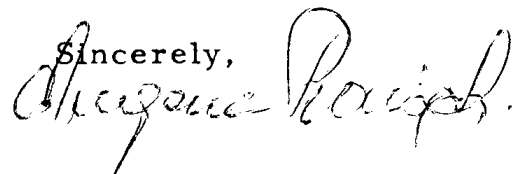
The attached survey and Form A is submitted in our belief that the described property does not constitute a subdivision under the subdivision control laws.

The aforementioned property contains two parcels of land on West Road with the necessary frontage and two parcels on Calkins Road with the necessary frontage.

We have checked with the County Engineers who state that Calkins Road is a "Public Way" which has been abandoned for maintenance purposes only. According to the County Engineers, their records indicate that the Town of Alford has never divested it's ownership in the Calkins Road to the abutters.

Since the four parcels are both located on "Public Ways" and contain more than the necessary frontage, it is our opinion that this division does not come under the subdivision control laws.

Your earliest consideration would be appreciated.

Sincerely,


Eugene Raisch

Town of Alford Records Harrison Calkins Road

SIDNEY Q. CURTISS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
314 MAIN STREET
GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS. 01230

AREA CODE 413
TELEPHONE 528-0500

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. BOX 68

December 7, 1978

Gustav J. Berkel, Jr., Chairperson
Board of Selectmen
Town of Alford
Alford, Massachusetts

Dear Gus:

I have carefully examined the extracts from the Alford town meetings between March 15, 1926 and February 16, 1971. Because of the language used I find legal interpretation difficult.

However, it would appear that on March 15, 1926 Calkins Road was discontinued as a town way, but that the selectmen were authorized to plow the same for use by sleighs and wagons in the winter months. The words used in that vote "if needed" seem to indicate that the selectmen did make a plowing decision, and since the words "in the winter" are used, it would seem that snow plowing or possibly sanding is what this vote means.

The town meeting of February 11, 1935 affirmatively closed the highways therein described, namely, the one "which begins at a point on the west side of West St. near the residence of L. D. Oles and extends over the mountain to a point where it intersects the highway that passes the residence of Taylor Day, and ends at a gate which ends the Trumper Lot" so-called "now owned by F. S. Pearson. Also, voted to discontinue the highway that passes the west side of Taylor Day's house from a point twenty (20) feet north of said house, north of the New York State line. Voted to discontinue the highway that passes over what is known as White's Hill from the lower entrance of the property owned by Foster, west to the New York State line."

On February 14, 1938 an article was apparently presented to reopen Harrison Calkins Road, and the town clerk's records show that this article was "Past". I assume this to mean that the article was tabled and therefore the so-called Harrison Calkins Road was not reopened at that time.

**Town of Alford Records
Harrison Calkins Road**

Town of Alford

Re: Calkins Rd.

**INCORPORATED
1773
ALFORD
MASSACHUSETTS**

FROM THE DESK OF: Gustav J. Berkel, Jr.
Chairman
Board of Selectmen

October 3, 1984

Sidney Curtiss, Esq.
Main St.
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Dear Sid,

Mr. & Mrs. Herbert S. Johnson have contacted the Selectmen regarding the status of the so-called Calkins Road, apparently they have a prospective purchaser for their property.

They inquired as to the legal definition of a "discontinued" road verses an "abandoned road" under Mass. law. Judge Donelan views, when he was Alford's Town Counsel in 1973 are incorporated in the Selectmen's letter of October 2, 1973.

It appears that the intention of the townspeople was to "discontinue" Calkins Road - do you concur on this point.

After review of the attached may we have your comments on these points and you may wish to contact Mr. Jim McElroy, who represents the Herbert Johnson's in this matter as we would like to cooperate where we can.

The use of the phrase "passed" has always given me some concern, especially when one can be confused as to A) was it passed over - ie: tabled or B) passed by an affirmative vote - do you have any comments on this.

All of this points out our concern over these roads that have been discontinued or abandoned or a combination of both!

Sincerely,

GJB
Gustav J. Berkel, Jr.
Chairman

GJB/mmvd

cc: Selectmen
Planning Board

Attached: Oct. 2, 1984 letter - *copy attached*

**Town of Alford Records
Harrison Calkins Road**

SIDNEY Q. CURTISS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
314 MAIN STREET
GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS. 01230

AREA CODE 413
TELEPHONE 526-0500

MAILING ADDRESS
P. O. BOX 68

October 9, 1984

Gustav J. Berkel, Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Town of Alford
RFD 3, Box 170A
Great Barrington, Mass. 01230

Dear Mr. Berkel:

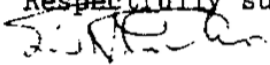
The words "discontinuance" and "abandonment" are used frequently interchangeably.

Technically, under our statutes town ways which have been legally laid out may be discontinued by vote of a town meeting (see Section 21 of Chapter 82 of the General Laws). When this vote is taken, sometimes the word "discontinued" is used and sometimes the word "abandoned" is used. The effect is the same.

After an affirmative vote, the municipality ceases to have obligations to repair and maintain the way and has no further liability to persons injured or property damaged as a result of highway defects. The easement over the land for public travel ceases and absolute title vests in the owner of the underlying fee.

When the terms "discontinuing" and "abandonment" are properly used, "discontinuance" implies affirmative action, and "abandonment" implies circumstances coupled with non-use over a long period of time and usually amounts to a cessation of use or enjoyment with no intention to resume or reclaim.

Respectfully submitted,


SIDNEY Q. CURTISS,
Town Counsel

SQC:hh

Town of Alford Records

Old Town Road (a.k.a. John B. Dellea Road)

93

ARTICLE XV. To see if the Town will vote to discontinue that part of the Way known as ~~the~~ Old Town Road a.k.a. John B. Dellea Road, described below, or any other part thereof, pursuant to the General Laws Chapter 82, Section 21 to the extent such Way, or any part thereof, is a public Way not previously discontinued:

The following described Way situated westerly of route 71 a.k.a. Green River Valley Road in Alford, Berkshire County, Massachusetts bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a point computed, said point being the southeast corner of the Way herein described and in a line of land of one Dellea;
Running thence N-18-01-56-W a distance of 169.00 feet along land of said Dellea to a point computed, said point being a corner of land of one Culleton;
Running thence the following seven courses along land of said Culleton:
N-18-01-56-W a distance of 139.2 feet to a point computed;
N-20-42-06-W a distance of 50.87 feet to a point computed;
N-09-22-02-W a distance of 182.25 feet to a point computed;
N-12-09-14-W a distance of 360.27 feet to a point computed;
N-08-05-45-W a distance of 152.98 feet to a point computed;
N-04-36-59-W a distance of 93.89 feet to a point computed;
N-11-31-13-W a distance of 47.82 feet to a n iron rod to be set, said point being the northeast corner of the parcel herein described and in line of land of one Barnard;
Running thence S-72-47-51-W a distance of 31.72 feet along land of said Barnard to a point computed, said point also being a corner of the land of said Culleton;
Running thence the following ten courses along land of said Culleton:
S-72-47-51-W a distance of 18.53 feet to an iron rod to be set, said point also being the southwest corner of the parcel herein described;
S-11-31-13-E a distance of 38.83 feet to a point computed;
S-04-36-59-E a distance of 92.40 feet to a point computed;
S-08-05-45-E a distance of 119.74 feet to an iron rod to be set;
S-08-05-45-E a distance of 36.53 feet to a point computed;
S-12-09-14-E a distance of 234.63.53 feet to an iron rod to be set;
S-12-09-14-E a distance of 126.20 feet to a point computed;
S-09-22-02-E a distance of 186.00 feet to a point computed;
S-20-42-06-E a distance of 54.66 feet to a point computed;
S-18-01-56-E a distance of 131.45 feet to a point computed, said point also being a corner and of said Dellea;
S-18-01-56-E a distance of 175.71 feet along land of said Dellea to a point computed, said point also being the southwest corner of the parcel herein described;
Running thence N-71-58-04-E a distance of 50.00 feet along land of said dellea to the point

Page 6

(Big Book #101)
Passed unanimously
Pg. 7
May 16, 1995

**Town of Alford Records
Whites Hill Road**

Discontinued Roads

**TOWN OF
MASSACHUSETTS**

ZIP CODE NO. _____

FROM THE OFFICE OF _____

_____19

Annual Town Meeting February 11, 1935

Article 9. Voted: That the Town discontinues the highway which begins at a point on the west side of West St. near the residence of L.D. Oles and extends over the mountain to a point where it intersects the highway that passes the residence of Taylor Day, and ends at a gate which enters the Trunper Lot so called now owned by F.S. Pearson, Also Voted: to discontinue the highway that passes the west side of Taylor Days house from a point twenty (20) feet north of said house, north to the New York State line, ~~XX~~ Voted: to discontinue the highway that passes over what is known as ~~W~~ White's Hill from the lower entrance of the property owned by "Foster" West to the New York State line.

Note from Dolores Stein

This page was attached by paper clip to a page of Plenn Bd. minutes for Oct. 6, 1970 - by Alice Pederson, Clerk at the time.

HOBBS & WARREN, INC.
LIBERTY 2-7947

Town of Alford Records
Precedence of Local Regulations in Determining
Adequacy of Discontinued or Private Ways

- Page 2 -

October 26, 1972

I am informed that at some time in the past the Town of Alford discontinued the three roads described in the letter. Discontinuance of a town way is accomplished by vote of the Town Meeting in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 82 Section 21 of the General Laws. Thereafter the status of the road changes and the Town is no longer responsible for its upkeep and repair. In the case of Mahan vs Rockport in 287 Massachusetts 34 (1934), the Court said "It is settled that a public way once duly laid out continues to be such until legally discontinued." After the discontinuance of these town ways, they no longer could come within the definition of "public way" set out in Chapter 41 above quoted.

The question then remains whether they are subject to the subdivision rules and regulations even if they are now private ways. As to this, the definition above quoted makes it clear that it is up to the Planning Board to make a determination whether the discontinued way has sufficient width, suitable grades and adequate construction to meet the requirements of the subdivision rules and regulations. If the Planning Board is of opinion that it does not, then the developer will have to comply with the subdivision rules and regulations on roadways before going forward with the subdivision.

Very truly yours,

RJD:mw

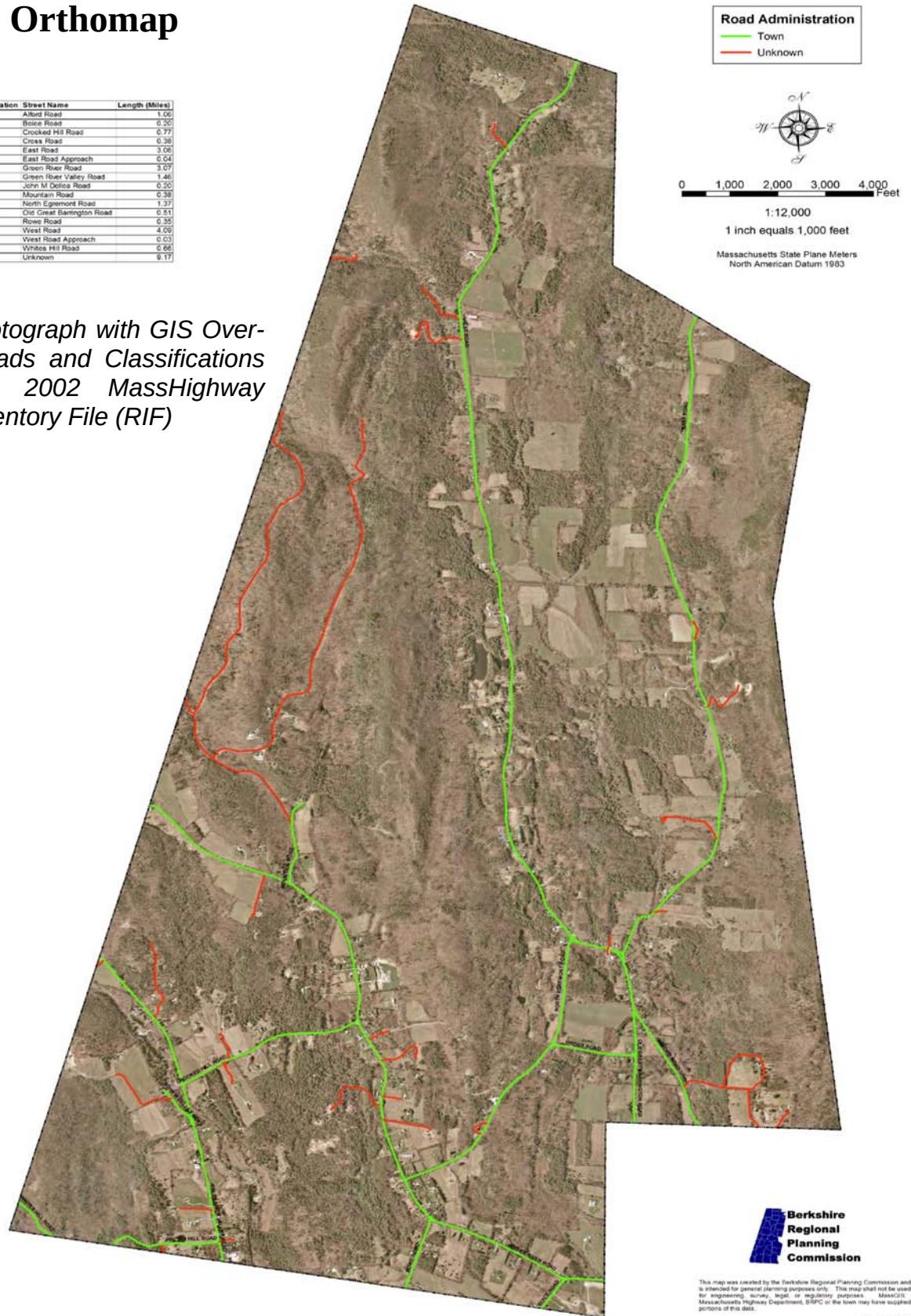
cc: Mr. Raymond Wilcox
Mrs. Alice Pedersen



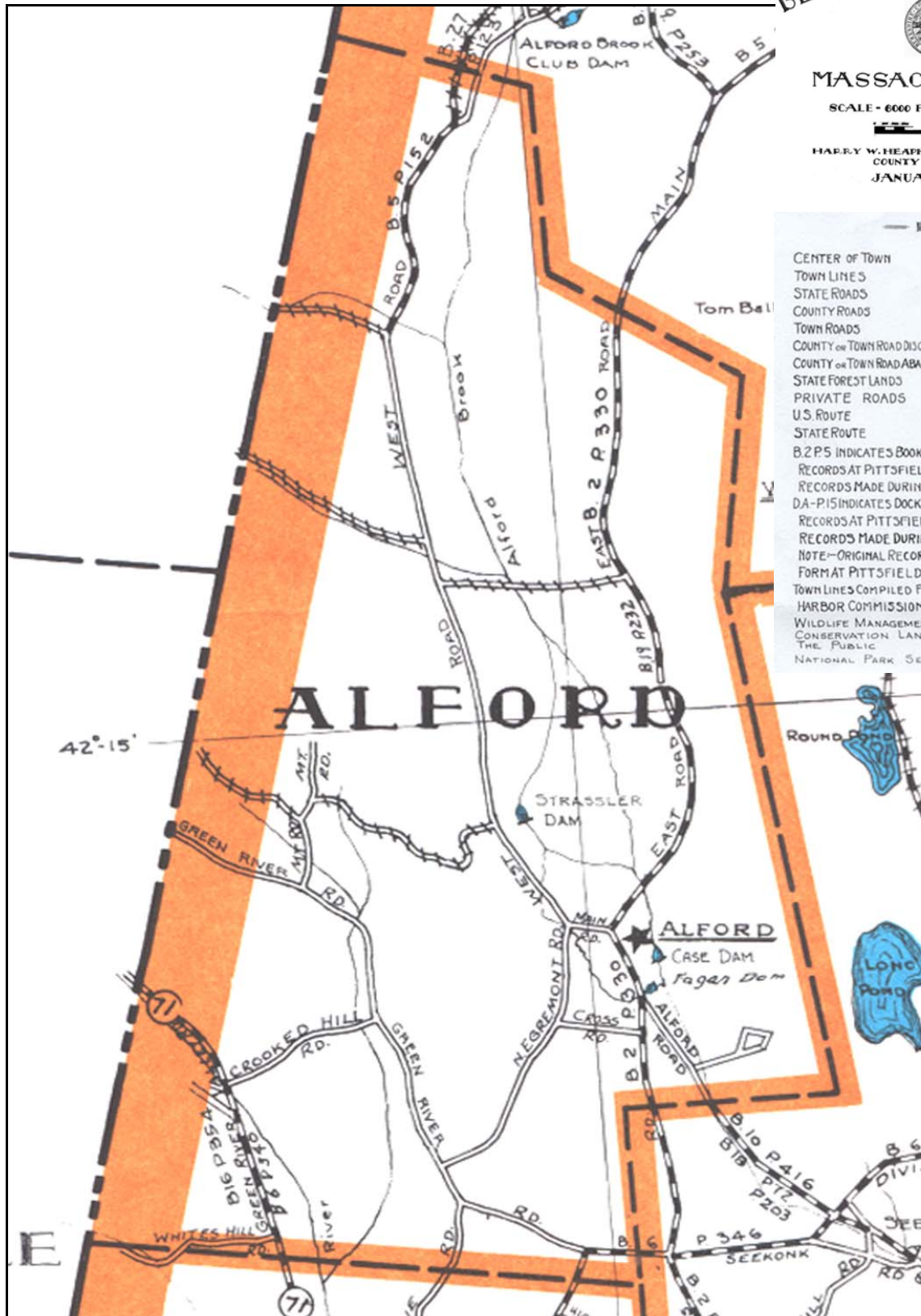
Map 1: Orthomap

Administration	Street Name	Length (Miles)
Town	Albert Road	1.06
Town	Boice Road	0.20
Town	Crooked Hill Road	0.77
Town	Cross Road	0.38
Town	East Road	3.06
Town	East Road Approach	0.04
Town	Green River Road	3.07
Town	Green River Valley Road	1.46
Town	John M. Dollea Road	0.20
Town	Mountain Road	0.38
Town	North Egremont Road	1.37
Town	Old Great Savinington Road	0.51
Town	Rowe Road	0.35
Town	West Road	4.09
Town	West Road Approach	0.03
Town	Whites Hill Road	0.66
Unknown	Unknown	9.17

Aerial Photograph with GIS Overlay of Roads and Classifications from the 2002 MassHighway Road Inventory File (RIF)



Map 2: County Engineer's Map 1988 Edition (last revision)



MAP OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY



MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE - 6000 FEET TO AN INCH



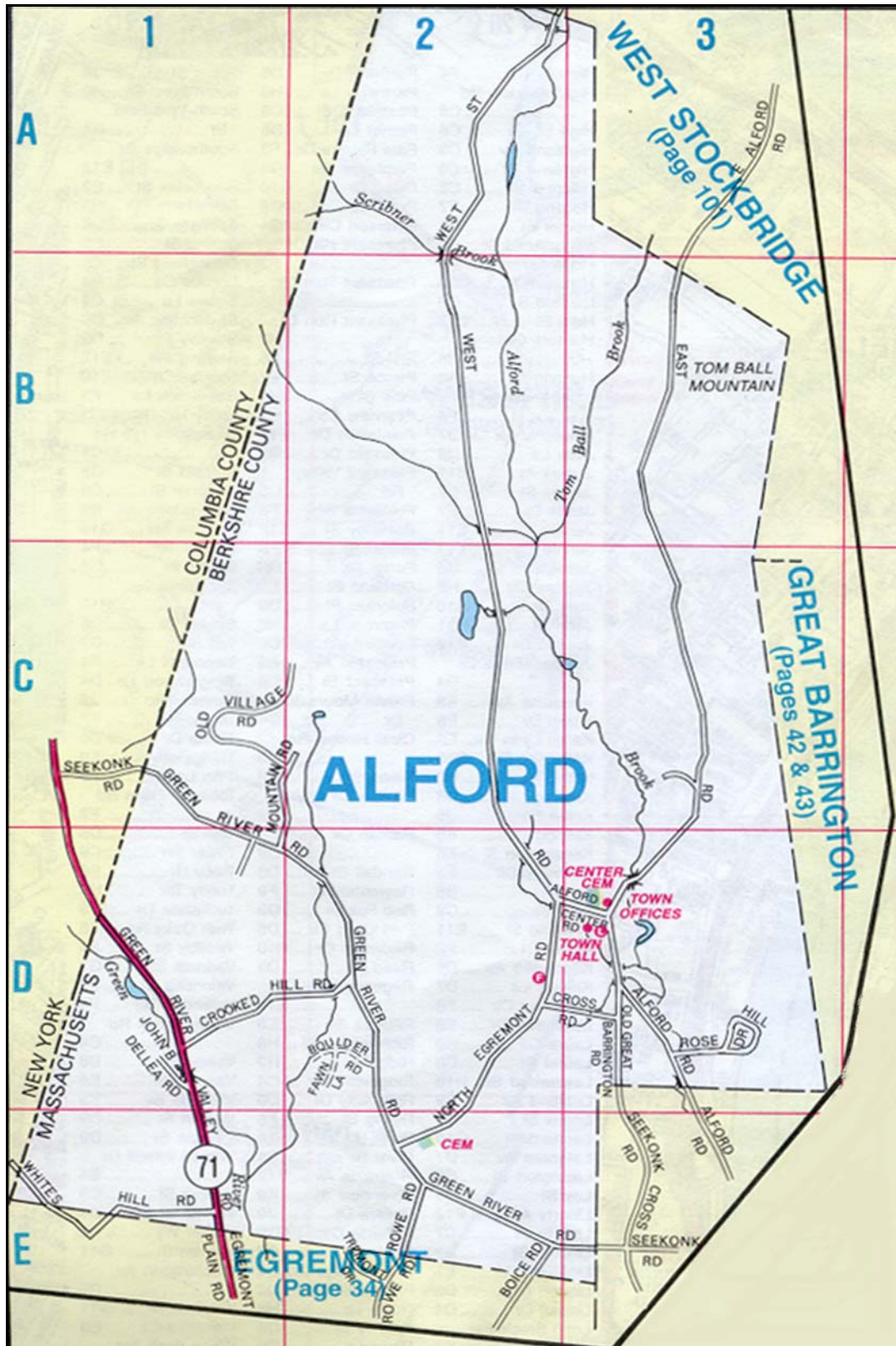
HARRY W. HEAPHY C.E. LEE, MASS
COUNTY ENGINEER
JANUARY 1937

LEGEND

CENTER OF TOWN	THIS REV. ★
TOWN LINES	— — — — —
STATE ROADS	— — — — —
COUNTY ROADS	— — — — —
TOWN ROADS	— — — — —
COUNTY or TOWN ROAD DISCONTINUED BY VOTE	— — — — —
COUNTY or TOWN ROAD ABANDONED FOR USE	— — — — —
STATE FOREST LANDS	— — — — —
PRIVATE ROADS	— — — — —
U.S. ROUTE	— — — — —
STATE ROUTE	— — — — —
B. 2 P. 5 INDICATES BOOK 2 PAGE 5 OF THE ORIGINAL COUNTY RECORDS AT PITTSFIELD (RESULT OF SEARCH OF COUNTY RECORDS MADE DURING 1936-1937)	
DA-P. 15 INDICATES DOCKET A PAGE 15 OF THE ORIGINAL COUNTY RECORDS AT PITTSFIELD (RESULT OF SEARCH OF COUNTY RECORDS MADE DURING 1936-1937)	
NOTE - ORIGINAL RECORDS NOW AVAILABLE IN TYPED WRITTEN FORMAT PITTSFIELD	
TOWN LINES COMPILED FROM DATA OF THE MASS. LAND AND HARBOR COMMISSION	
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA	— — — — —
CONSERVATION LAND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC	— — — — —
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	— — — — —

Map 3: Official Arrow Street Atlas of Western Massachusetts

1998 Second Edition



Legend to Street Maps

HIGHWAY MARKERS

1 U.S. 146 State
95 Interstate 1 Interchange No.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Points of Interest
- Golf Courses
- Schools
- Colleges & Universities
- Ski Areas
- Downhill Cross Country
- Hospitals
- Public Transportation Stations
- Libraries
- Police Stations
- Post Office
- Fire Stations

MAP INDEX

ALFORD

Streets

Alford Center Rd

Alford Rd

Boice Rd

Boulder Rd

Crooked Hill Rd

Cross Rd

East Rd

Fawn La

Green River Rd

Green River Valley Rd

Jay La

John B Della Rd

Mountain Rd

North Egremont Rd

Old Great Barrington Rd

Old Village Rd

Rose Hill Dr

Rowe Rd

Tremont Dr

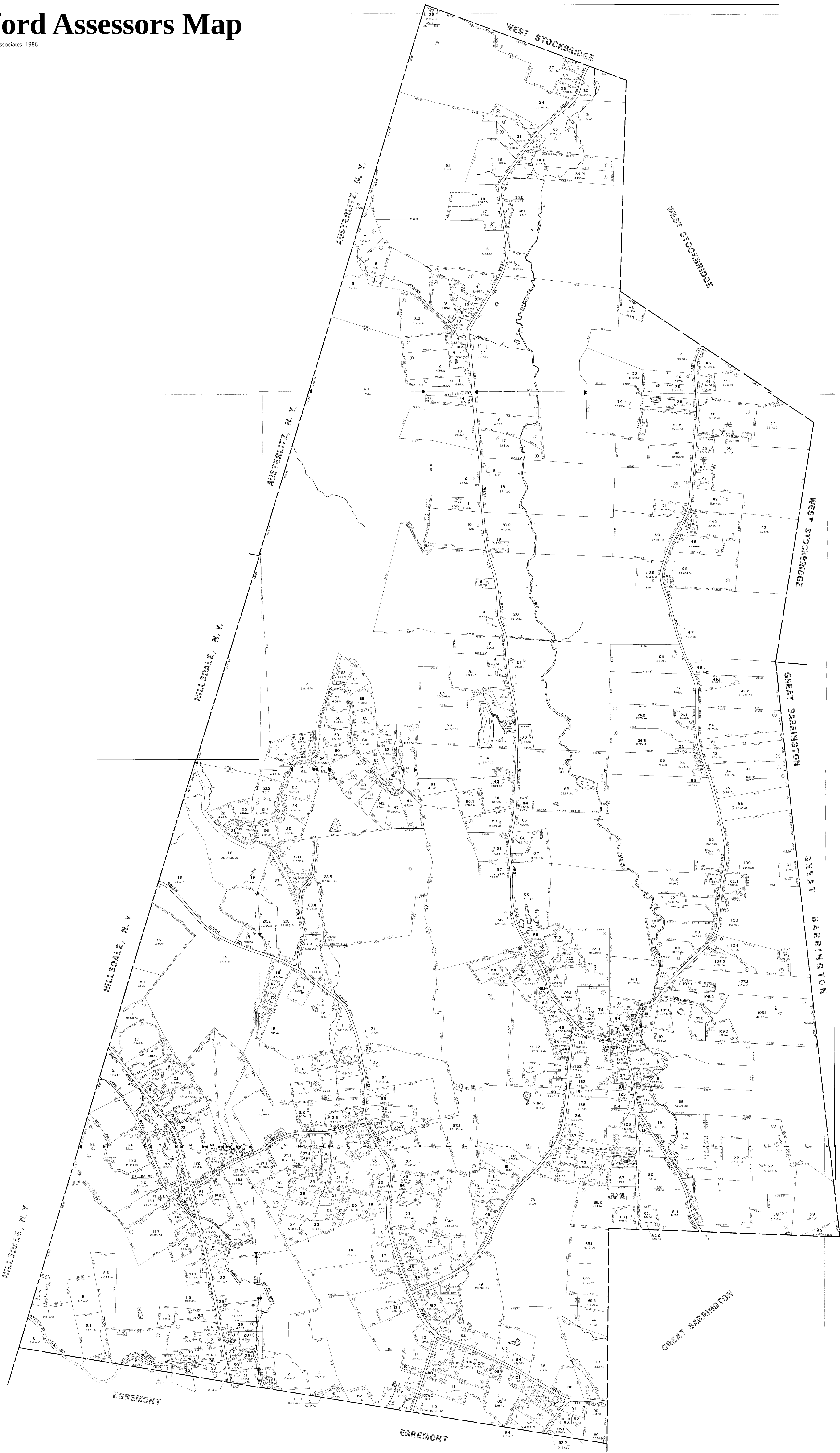
West Rd

Whites Hill Rd

Old Great Barrington Rd	D3
Old Village Rd	C1
Rose Hill Dr	D3
Rowe Rd	E2
Tremont Dr	E1
West Rd	B2
Whites Hill Rd	E1

Alford Assessors Map

Cartographic Associates, 1986



**Reference Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting
Town of Richmond, MA
May 28, 2003**

**Article 18: Road Discontinuance
Article 19: Official Map Adoption**

159

Noting there was a quorum, the Moderator, Douglas Chapman, opened the meeting at 7:31 PM and the Town Clerk, Edna Crewdson, read the warrant. The head table was introduced as was the Town Counsel, Sally Bell. Instructions as to the procedure for the meeting was given and the Moderator asked all non registered voters to identify themselves.

Total voters present: 167
Total voters – active 1070
inactive 82

WARRANT FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Berkshire, ss

To any of the Constables of the Town of Richmond in said County, Greetings:

In the name of said Commonwealth, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Richmond qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet in the Consolidated School of said Richmond on May 28, 2003, at 7:30 PM, and then and there to act upon the following:

Article 1- To hear and act upon the reports of the Town Officers and Committees and give authority and instruction in relation thereto. *The voters approved this article at 7:37 PM.*

Article 2- To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to determine the manner of repairing the highways and caring for the cemeteries for the year. (Approved by the Finance Committee) *Approved by voters at 7:38 PM.*

Article 3- To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as shall be deemed necessary for the upkeep and repair of the buildings, equipment, highways and cemeteries and for all other charges and expenses of the Town for the year and to set the salaries and compensation of all elected officers of the Town as provided by Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the General Laws. (Approved by the Finance Committee)

Article 18- To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the following roads:

ROAD #	ROAD NAME/DESCRIPTION
1	Foster Drive, so called, located at the old landfill.
2	Unnamed road extending 0.617 miles between the northwest end of Osceola Rd. Extension- and the southeast end of Anthony Rd.
3	Unnamed road extending 0.280 miles between the northwest end of Anthony Rd. and the northeast quarter of Orchard Circle.
4	Unnamed road extending 0.312 miles between the northern end of Orchard Circle and the northern end of Dublin Rd.

Approved by voters at 9:03 PM.

Article 19- To see if the Town will vote to adopt an Official Map in accordance with the provisions of Section 81E of Chapter 41 of the General Laws. The map, dated May 28, 2003, approved by the Planning Board, entitled "Official Map, Town of Richmond, Massachusetts" by Mark Maloy and Melissa Jette of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, reflects the action taken under Article 18 (above) and is on file with the Town Clerk. *The voters approved this article at 9:16 PM.*

5

Reference Warrant for Official Map Adoption Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting Town of Sudbury, MA 1970

Article 36: Official Map Adoption

CONTROL COMMITTEE OF THE TOWN TO CO-ORDINATE, INITIATE AND STIMULATE ACTION ON PROGRAMS TO PREVENT DRUG ABUSE AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED THAT SUCH COMMITTEE KEEP INFORMED ON THE PROGRAMS OF ALL DRUG ACTION COMMITTEES, DEPARTMENTS AND GROUPS WITHIN THE TOWN AND REPORT ON PROGRESS AT REGULAR INTERVALS THROUGH THE TOWN FATHERS AND NEWSPAPERS DISTRIBUTED IN THE TOWN.

Article 34: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 8, and all amendments thereto, which provides, in essence, that no proposed ordinance or by-law making a change in any existing zoning ordinance or by-law which has been unfavorably acted upon by a Town Meeting shall be considered on its merits by the Town Meeting within two years after the date of such unfavorable action unless the adoption of such proposed ordinance or by-law is recommended in the final report of the Planning Board required by Chapter 40A, Section 6, or act on anything relative thereto.

Submitted by the Planning Board and Committee on Town Administration.

Mr. Richard Davison moved for the Planning Board that the Town accept the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 8 and all amendments thereto.

Planning Board Report: (Mr. Richard Davison) Following the public hearings held on February 25, 1970, the Planning Board agreed to continue recommending passage of this article. Mr. Davison added that the report of the Committee on Town Administration as printed in the warrant concisely covers the reason for this article.

Committee on Town Administration Report: By accepting General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 8, the Town would protect itself from having to consider previously defeated zoning by-law amendments within two years after their defeat unless the Planning Board submits a report recommending their adoption. As the matters that must be considered by the Town at its Annual Meeting increase in quantity and complexity, the Committee on Town Administration feels that it is advantageous to provide for some limitation on reconsidering zoning by-law amendments which the Planning Board—which is the elective body most concerned with the zoning by-law—does not support.

After discussion, the Planning Board's motion was defeated.

No further action was taken under this article.

Article 35: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 20, and all amendments thereto, so that no appeal or petition for a variance and no application for a special exemption which has been unfavorably acted upon by the Board of Appeals shall be reconsidered on its merits within two years after the date of such unfavorable action except with the consent of all but one of the members of the Planning Board, or act on anything relative thereto.

Submitted by the Planning Board.

Mr. Richard Brooks moved for the Planning Board that the Town accept the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 20 and all amendments thereto.

Planning Board Report: (Mr. Richard Brooks) The Planning Board recommends adoption of this article. At the public hearing no opposition was voted. The purpose of this article is to take advantage of the state enabling legislation which limits the inefficient repetitive appeals to zoning board of appeals for two years separation.

After discussion, the Planning Board's motion was defeated.

No further action was taken under this article.

Article 36: To see if the Town will vote to adopt an official map in accordance with the provisions of Section 81E of Chapter 41 of the General Laws, a copy of which, dated: January 1970, approved the Planning Board, entitled: "Official Map of the Town of Sudbury", by George D. White, Town Engineer, is on file in the Town Clerk's office, or act on anything relative thereto.

Submitted by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board.

Board of Selectmen Report: (Mr. Martin Doyle) The town map under Section 81E entitles any city or town to record a map showing the public ways, parks and any other private ways which they are entitled to. A town map may seem to be a rather inconsequential thing. However, it means that when we register a road or a way within the Town, we also have to have a detail registered with the Town Clerk which shows where the layout of drains, sewers, gas mains and electric mains are within that public way. It entails a certain amount of work on the part of the Town Engineer. As you are aware, the Town Engineer reports to the Board of Selectmen.

This year we have appropriated the sum of \$5,000 towards the Town Engineer's account for starting this work. Over the next five to ten years it will cost the Town that amount also. However, several years ago when Willis Road became an article for action by the Town Meeting as to whether it should be adopted by the Town, it cost the Town a certain amount of money to determine whether Willis Road was a town way or not.

The intent of this article is to insure that town ways are properly delineated, that we do not enter into arguments with builders and developers in the future as to whether or not a road is a town way, and that we have a proper record of what is laid within the town way to prevent confusion.

There are at present 299 streets in Sudbury. 209 of these appear on the Official Town Map. The 299 streets include those in proposed subdivisions. However, even in a matter of accounting for 209 streets there is room for confusion and we should have a proper record of these. We recommend that you vote for this article.

Planning Board Report: (Mr. Richard Brooks) The Planning Board favors adoption of this article which will settle for all time which are or are not to be considered public ways in the Town of Sudbury.

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee agrees with the sponsors of this article, that an official map of Sudbury, with well delimited street boundaries, is necessary. The Town Engineer's budget has \$5,000 included for subcontract survey services, the major portion of which is for this project.

Highway Commission Report: (Mr. Richard Duggan) The Highway Commission is also in favor of this article, but possibly for a slightly different reason. The work that will be done on the Official Town Map will help the Highway Department get ahead in the engineering it needs to lay out the roads that have to be rebuilt. We will not run into the problem yearly of having just one road to work on. We should always have two or three ahead of us.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: THAT THE TOWN ADOPT AS THE OFFICIAL MAP OF THE TOWN OF SUDBURY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 81E OF CHAPTER 41 OF THE GENERAL LAWS THE MAP DATED JANUARY 1970 APPROVED BY THE PLANNING BOARD, ENTITLED "OFFICIAL MAP OF THE TOWN OF SUDBURY," BY GEORGE D. WHITE, TOWN ENGINEER, A COPY OF WHICH IS ON FILE IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE WITH SAID MAP INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.

Article 37: To see if the Town will vote to amend its zoning by-law to change from residential zone B2 to a Limited Business District, the following described property:

Beginning at a point on the south side of the Boston Post Road at the junction of the westerly side of Raymond Road.

**Reference Warrant for Road Discontinuance
Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting
Town of Warwick, MA
May 9, 1988**

Article 17: Road Discontinuance

316

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Franklin County Technical School District to accept an Equal Educational Opportunity Grant (EEOG) from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the amount of \$13,929.00, in additional educational aid for fiscal year 1989.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, appropriate from free cash, transfer, borrow or otherwise provide the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purpose of widening, excavating, installing drainage and gravel, and constructing a cul-de-sac turnaround on Hastings Pond Road, a distance of .35 miles, to fund improvements to the road accepted by the Town under Article #3 of the November 9, 1987 Special Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A:4G, which raises the limit of expenditures not requiring public bidding from \$2,000.00 to \$4,000.00.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to rescind Article #9 of the May 11, 1987 Annual Town Meeting, thereby retaining \$20,000.00 in the Capital Stabilization Fund.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, appropriate from free cash, transfer, borrow or otherwise provide the sum of \$6,475.00 (\$3,145.00 tuition, \$3,330.00 transportation) for the Fiscal Year 1988 Warwick School Budget to cover the unanticipated costs of a special needs student.

ARTICLE ~~17~~¹⁷: To see if the Town will vote to discontinue all public roads in Warwick except those on the attached list of Public Ways

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Selectmen will petition the Franklin County Commissioners regarding the following County roads;

1. to accept a section of Route 78 between Hotel Road and Athol Road.
2. for discontinuance of 1829 layout of Highway #11 (5th Massachusetts Turnpike) westerly from the White Road to end (thought to be the southwest corner of the Spooner house; a distance of about 3,000 feet, more or less).
3. for discontinuance of Highway #1, laid out in 1761, Record Book 0, Page 44, from the Northfield Town Line, perhaps along a portion of the White Road, past Balancing Rock and the Old Fort to its end, and retaining as a town road ANY portions of the White Road, or other town roads with the same layout.
4. for discontinuance of a portion of Highway #2, laid out in 1774, Book 0, Page 106 (part of which may be known as Round the Mountain Trail or as Old Northfield Road) from its intersection with the present Northfield Road at Wendell Road to the Northfield Town Line, retaining any portion of Flower Hill Road which has the same layout, as a town road.
5. for discontinuance of Highway #6, laid out in 1822, Book I, Page 194, from the last discontinuance of Spooner Road, easterly to the White Road, a distance of about 2,000 feet, more or less; also, the portion from Northfield Road westerly and northerly across Leland Hill Road to the 1774 layout of the Northfield Road.
6. for discontinuance of a portion of Highway #2, laid out in 1774, Book 0, Page 106, westerly from Gale Road to the present Athol Road, also known as Pedeman Hill.
7. for discontinuance of Brush Valley Road (known on County records as Dubovik Road) from Orange Road to its end.
8. for a map of County roads in Warwick, color coded, with County number and layout date, overlayed on USGS Topographical sheets, and a second map showing discontinued County roads in the same form as the first map, but adding the date of discontinuance.

Reference Warrant for Road Discontinuance

Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting

Town of Warwick, MA

May 9, 1988

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will take action regarding the following Town roads, with each road a separate action:

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Road #	Name	Action Requested
1	Hastings Heights	change mileage from 1.55 to 1.84 miles
3	Royalston	discontinue from Tully Brook Road to Reil's driveway.
7	Wendell	change description from "to Orange Road" to "to intersection of Revere Hill Road". Add a new road named "Revere Hill": "from Orange Road to intersection of Wendell Road and Northfield Road, 0.25 mile" and change mileage of Wendell Road from 5.6 to 5.35 miles.
9	Store	change name to Northfield Road and add 0.55 mile.
10	Soderman	discontinue
13	Shaw Place	change mileage from 0.15 to 0.12 mile.
14	Wilson	discontinue the center portion from 1,000 feet southeasterly of the intersection of Flagg and Chestnut Hill at pole #10-733/5 about 50 feet past River's driveway, to the southeast side of Wilson Brook (which is about 1,100 feet northwesterly of intersection with Wendell Road), and change the name of East Wilson Road and West Wilson Road.
15	Flagg	discontinue
17	Shepardson	discontinue portion north of White Road (which is also known as Spooner Road), change mileage from 2.45 to 1.69 miles and change description from "to Northfield Road" to "to White Road".
18	Shepardson Place	change description from "to" to "toward".
19	White	change mileage from 2.35 to 2.8 miles
22	Mt. Grace Avenue	change description from "from Store Road" to "from Orange Road across Northfield Road" (Store Road) and change mileage to 0.15 mile.
23	Leland Hill	change mileage from 0.15 to 0.19 miles
26	Hastings	change name from "Hastings" to "Hastings Pond"
28	Tully Brook	discontinue
32	Smith Road	change mileage from 0.19 to 0.16 miles
33	Whipple Place	discontinue
34	Robbins	change mileage from 0.80 to 0.55 miles
35	Rum Brook	discontinue the center portion, starting 1,000 feet westerly from Richmond Road at the top of a knoll just west of Black Brook to a point 1,400 feet easterly from Old Winchester Road, meaning to be the west bank of Rum Brook, and changing the name to East Rum Brook Road and West Rum Brook Road, respectively.
36	Sevens Place	change description from "to" to "toward".
40	Beech Hill	change Description from "Thompson's" to "Doubleday's".

Article 19: Road Discontinuance/Alteration

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Road #	Name	Action Requested
43	South Holden Road	discontinue portion from 10 feet east of Sammy Lane to end and change description from "to Holden place" to "to Sammy Lane", a distance of 0.22 mile.
43	North Holden Road	change mileage from 0.15 to 0.12 mile.
44	Wheeler	discontinue 0.06 mile and change from "westerly loop off Orange Road" to "northerly off Orange Road to Dead End".
45	Paul	change description from "to" to "toward"
46	Pine	change description from "from Shepardson Road to Wilson Road" to "from Wendell Road to dead end".

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to establish a revolving fund for self-supporting services of the Town Forestry Committee, as authorized by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44:53D, and further, to raise and appropriate, appropriate from free cash, transfer or otherwise provide the sum of \$500.00 to establish this fund.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44:57, allowing the Treasurer, on behalf of the Town to contract with an employee to defer a portion of that employee's compensation.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to reappropriate \$21,000.00 of unused Revenue Sharing Funds to design and construct a fire escape for the Town Hall.

And you are directed to serve this Warrant, by posting up attested copies thereof at the Town Hall and the Community Store in said Town, 7 days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

HEREOF FAIL NOT, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as aforesaid.

Given under our hands this 2nd day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight.

Jon M. Cooke)
J. David Young) Selectmen of Warwick
Mickey Williamson)

A true copy Attest: Rodney F. Whipple, Constable

Franklin, ss.

PURSUANT TO THE WITHIN WARRANT, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Warwick May 2, 1988 by posting up attested copies of the same at the Town Hall and the Community Store 7 days before the date of the meeting, as within directed.

Rodney F. Whipple, Constable of Warwick

Reference Warrant for Road Discontinuance

Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting

Town of Warwick, MA

May 9, 1988

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PUBLIC ROADS--(as referenced in Article #17, Annual Town Meeting May 9, 1988

1. Hastings Heights Road: from Athol Road to Orange Town Line 1.55 miles
2. Athol Road: from Orange Road to Orange Town Line 3.55 miles
3. Royalston Road: from Athol Road to 1200 feet east of Chase Road 0.55 mile. Also, easterly from Tully Brook Road to Reil's driveway 0.40 mile.
4. Winchester Road (Route 78): from the end of Orange Road at Warwick Center to State Line (NH) 3.15 miles
5. Orange Road (Route 78): from end of Winchester Road at Warwick Center to Orange Town Line 5.00 miles
6. Hockanum Road: from Orange Road to Wendell Road 0.80 mile
7. Wendell Road: from Orange Town Line to Orange Road 5.60 miles
8. Northfield Road: from Northfield Town Line to junction of Wendell Road 4.00 miles
9. Store Road: from Wendell Road to junction of Orange and Winchester Roads at Warwick Center 0.45 mile
10. Soderman Road: from White Road to Soderman place 0.25 mile
11. Quarry Road: from Wendell Road to Northfield Town Line 1.55 miles
12. Omitted
13. Shaw Place Road: from Wendell Road westerly to Shaw place 0.15 mile
14. Wilson Road: from Wendell Road to junction of Flagg and Chestnut Hill Roads 0.85 mile
15. Flagg Road: from junction of Chestnut Hill and Wilson Roads westerly and southerly to end at woods 0.35 mile
16. Chestnut Hill Road: from junction of Flagg and Wilson Roads to Wendell Road 1.05 miles
17. Shepardson Road: from Wendell Road to Northfield Road 2.45 miles
18. Shepardson Place Road: from Shepardson Road westerly to old house 0.25 mile
19. White Road: from Northfield Road by southerly loop back to Northfield Road 2.35 miles
20. Kirk Road: from Orange Road easterly to Kirk place 0.05 mile
21. Omitted
22. Mount Grace Avenue: from Store Road to old Cook house 0.05 mile
23. Leland Hill Road: from Northfield Road to Flower Hill Road 0.15 mile
24. Flower Hill Road: from Northfield Road to Winchester Road 2.35 miles
25. Buzzell Place Road: from Flower Hill Road westerly to Buzzell house 0.05 mile
26. Hastings Road: from Orange Road to Cadwell's driveway 1.10 mile
27. Hotel Road: from junction of Orange and Winchester Roads to Athol Road 0.05 mile
28. Tully Brook Road: from Athol Road to Royalston Road 1.00 mile
29. Omitted
30. Chase Road: from Royalston Road to Athol Road 0.55 mile

List of Roads Referred to in Article 17

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31. Richmond Road: from Athol Road to State Line (NH) 2.80 miles
32. Smith Road: (re-opened 3/31/75) 1,000 feet from Richmond Road 0.19 mile
33. Whipple Place Road: from Richmond Road westerly to Whipple place 0.05 mile
34. Robbins Road: from Old Winchester Road to Winchester Road 0.80 mile
35. Old Winchester Road: from Athol Road to State Line (NH) 2.85 miles
36. Stevens Place Road: from Old Winchester Road easterly to Stevens Place 0.15 mile
37. Rum Brook Road: from Richmond Road to Old Winchester Road 0.75 mile
38. Gale Road: from Athol Road to Orange Town Line 2.55 miles
39. Omitted
40. Beech Hill Road: from Gale Road southerly to Thompson place 1.10 mile
41. Brush Valley Road: from Beech Hill Road to Orange Road 1.25 miles
42. Bliss Hill Road: from Orange Town Line to Royalston Town Line 0.20 mile
43. South Holden Road: from Wendell Road easterly to Holden place 0.35 mile - North Holden Road: from Orange Road westerly to house 0.15 mile
44. Wheeler Road: westerly loop off Orange Road 0.20 mile
45. Paul Road: from Orange Road easterly to house and buildings 0.10 mile
46. Pine Street: from Shepardson Road to Wilson Road 0.18 mile
47. Garage Road: from Winchester Road to Town Garage 0.40 mile
48. Rockwood Road: from Hastings Road to Orange Road 0.10 mile

REPORT OF THE ACTION TAKEN ON THE ARTICLES IN THE WARRANT FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING May 9, 1988

Prior to the commencement of the Annual Town Meeting, a brief ceremony was conducted by the Moderator, Helen E. Whipple, commemorating the first town meeting held in Warwick on this same date 225 years ago, May 9, 1763. The Annual Town Meeting for May 9, 1988 was called to order by the Moderator. The following action was taken on the Articles in the warrant by the 97 voters present:

ARTICLE 1: VOTED: To accept the reports of Town Officers and Committees.

ARTICLE 2: VOTED: to authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectmen, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1988, in accordance with the General Laws Chapter 44;4, and to issue a note or notes therefore, payable within one year, and to renew any note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year, in accordance with the General Laws Chapter 44;17.

Official Map

Town of Alford, Massachusetts

Administration	Street Name	Length (miles)	Grid
Town	Alford Center Road	0.20	C6
Town	Alford Road	0.85	C7
Town	Boice Road	0.20	B8
Town	Crooked Hill Road	0.77	B7
Town	Cross Road	0.38	C7
Town	Dellea Road	0.20	A7
Town	East Road	3.06	C4
Town	East Road Approach	0.04	C6
Town	Green River Road	3.07	B6
Town	Green River Valley Road	1.46	A7
Town	Mountain Road	0.38	B6
Town	North Egremont Road	1.37	B7
Town	Old Barrington Road	0.52	C7
Town	Rowe Road	0.35	B8
Town	West Road	4.09	B4
Town	West Road Approach	0.03	B6
Town	Whites Hill Road	0.45	A8
Discontinued	Whites Hill Road	0.21	A8
Private	Boulder Road	0.32	B7
Private	Fawn Lane	0.12	B7
Private	Highland Drive	0.25	C6
Private	Jay Lane	0.21	B6
Private	Laurel Hill Road	0.71	B4
Private	Old Village Road	0.93	B5
Private	Private BNRC Road	2.76	B4
Private	Rose Hill Drive	0.70	C7
Statutory Private Way	Harrison Calkins Road	0.65	B2
Statutory Private Way	Old Village Road	0.46	B5

This map was adopted by the Town under Article XX of the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting (DATE).

Town Clerk: _____

Date: _____

Planning Board

_____Chair

Town Accepted Road

Discontinued

Private Road

Statutory Private Way

Perennial Stream

Intermittent Stream

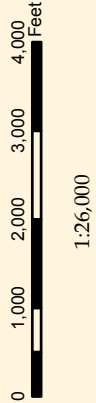
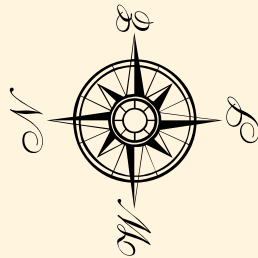
Lake / Pond

Wetland / Marsh

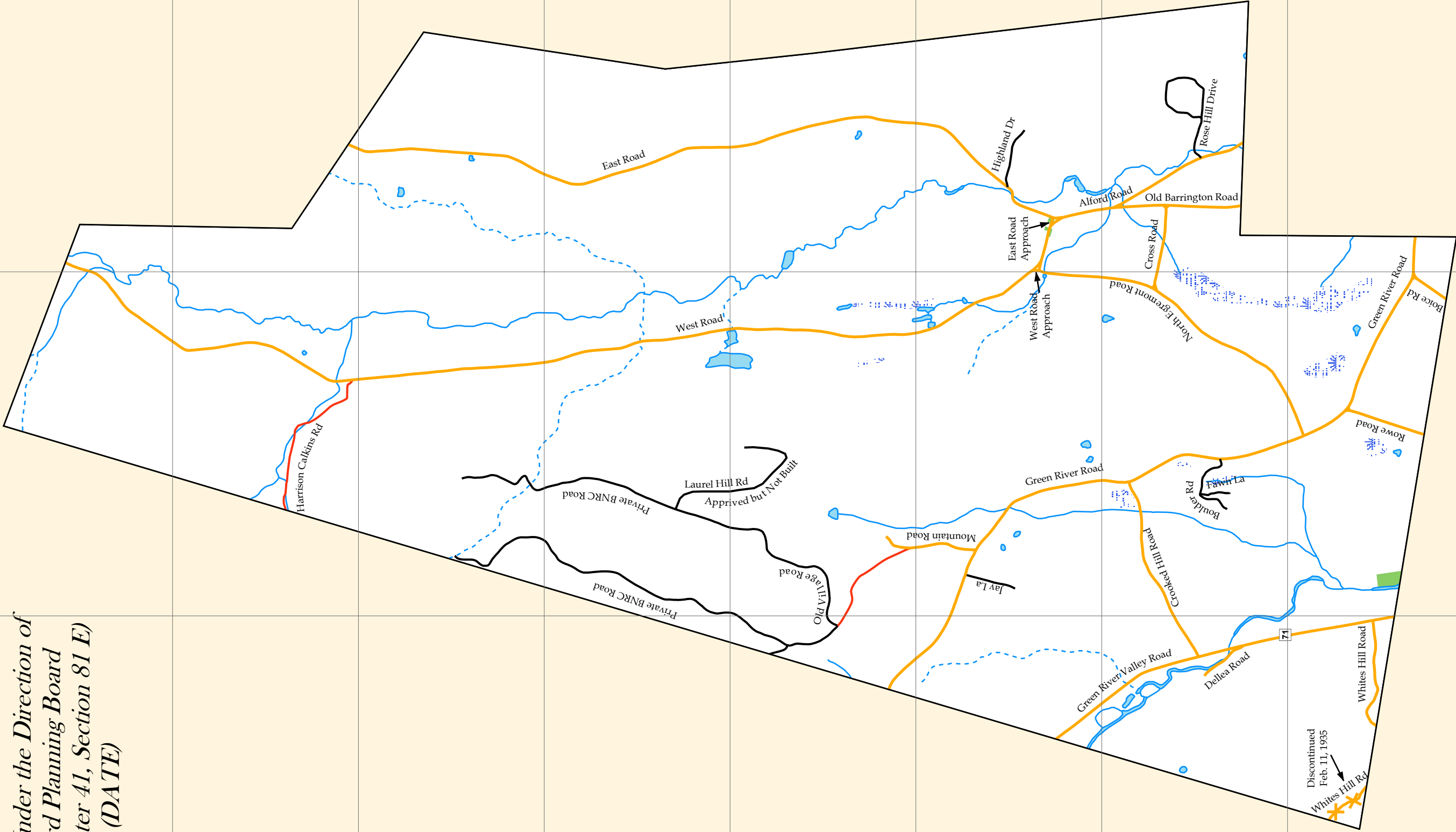
Municipal Land



Prepared Under the Direction of
the Alford Planning Board
(G.L. Chapter 41, Section 81 E)
(DATE)



Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



Introduction to GIS Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are quickly becoming a staple of our times. Defined broadly, GIS is a computer-based system “for capture, retrieval, analysis, and display of spatial (locationally defined) data.” The essential elements in this definition for local governments are “spatial” and “analysis”: where are things, why do we want to know about them, and how can our community use this information to make better decisions?

GIS is a system of computer software, hardware, data, and personnel to help manipulate, analyze and present information that is tied to a specific location on the earth. Aspects of GIS include:

spatial location – usually a geographic location

information – visualization of analysis of data

system – linking software, hardware, data

personnel –the key to the power of GIS

GIS applies modern computer graphics and database technology to the efficient, cost-effective management and planning of the local government's assets. It provides enhanced capabilities for data storage, retrieval, and analysis. GIS does this by linking (1) maps and (2) databases. This marriage lets us easily explore the relationship between (1) location and (2) information.

The real key for small city governments is that GIS quickly integrates *information with location*. Through its use of computer technology, GIS provides a better, faster, easier way for local officials to find answers to questions and carry out analyses based on spatial relationships.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission uses GIS in projects covering almost all aspects of planning. This includes environmental, land use, community development, transportation, economic and housing projects. BRPC uses our GIS for map creation, data development and spatial analysis.

Throughout the Community Development Plan, GIS has been used to create a series of base maps illustrating what is in each community and has allowed community officials to determine where the most suitable locations are for various types of development / preservation. Some communities also used suitability maps to assist them in determine where the best locations for development / preservation were. These suitability maps were created by evaluating the importance of various environmental, housing, economic, and transportation items and plotting the best and worst locations based on the combination of all these factors. The final maps presented throughout the report show the decisions that were arrived at by the community. In this section, the base maps are presented as reference to show what is currently in the town. The descriptions of the mapped items that you will find within these base maps are listed below.

Introduction to Development Suitability Maps

Description of Map Attributes

Environmental Resources

Drinking Water

Aquifers – shows medium and high yield aquifers as delineated by USGS Water Resource Division. The original data is from the USGS 1:48,000 hydrologic atlas series on groundwater favorability.

Interim Wellhead Protection areas – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources in the absence of an approved Zone II. The radius around the well is determined by the pumping rate in GPM of the well. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Lakes/Ponds Resource Area – shows a 100 ft. buffer around the lakes and ponds that are on the USGS topographical maps. This buffer shows the area that has an immediate impact of the lakes and ponds.

Outstanding Resource Water – shows waters which constitute an outstanding resource as determined by their outstanding socioeconomic, recreational, ecological, and / or aesthetic values and which shall be protected and maintained as determined under Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards of 1995

Wellhead Protection Zone I – shows a 400 ft. buffer around public water supply points.

Wellhead Protection Area Zone II – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources based upon the area of an aquifer which contributes to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can realistically be anticipated. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Water Bodies and Protection Areas

FEMA 100yr. Floodplain – shows areas of possible risk associated with flooding. This layer was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)

Lakes / Ponds Resource Areas – 100 ft - shows a 100-foot buffer around lakes and ponds that defines the resource area that contributes to the lake/pond. The lakes and ponds are derived from USGS topo maps.

River Protection Area – 200 ft. – Shows a 200-foot buffer delineating the resource area of perennial streams. These areas were created as an addition to the long-standing Wetlands Protection Act. The law establishes protected riverfront areas that extend 200 feet from the mean annual high-water line.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone A – shows land between the surface water source and the upper boundary of the bank, the land within a 400 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source and the land within a 200 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the

bank of a tributary or associated surface water body. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone B – shows the land within one-half mile of the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source or the edge of the watershed, whichever is less. Zone B always included the land area within a 400 ft lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of the Class A surface water source. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Wetland Resource Areas – shows a 100-foot buffer around wetlands that defines the resource area that contributes to the wetland. The wetlands are derived from USGS topographical maps.

Wetlands – shows wetlands derived from USGS topographical maps.

Soils / Geology

Excessively Drained Soils– shows soils that have too much or too rapid loss of water, either by percolation or by surface flow. The occurrence of internal free water is very rare or very deep. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Highly Erodible Soils – shows soils that are highly susceptible to erosion from wind and/or water. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Hydric Soils – Soils that are wet long enough to periodically produce anaerobic conditions, thereby influencing the growth of plants. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Poorly Drained soils– shows soils that do not lose water very rapidly. The occurrence of free water is common. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Scenic Landscapes – shows areas identified as having distinctive or noteworthy scenic landscapes as part of the Massachusetts Landscape Inventory Project, Department of Environmental Management, 1981.

Slopes Greater than 15% - shows slopes that are greater than 15% based on slope information derived from either 3 or 10-meter contours generated by MassGIS

Biological

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern – shows the location of areas that have been designated ACECs by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. This designation requires greater environmental review of certain kinds of proposed development under state agency jurisdiction with the boundary.

Contiguous Natural Lands – shows large, contiguous tracts of natural land. “Contiguous” lands are defined to be at least 250 contiguous acres and “Natural” lands are defined based on the land use codes for water, forest, shrubland, pasture and wetland. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Natural Land Riparian Corridors – shows contiguous natural lands within a 100-meter corridor encompassing perennial streams and river features. These areas within the riparian corridor remain in a “natural state”, potentially functioning as a corridor for select species movement, as well as additional ecological purposes. These data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

NHESP BioMap Core Habitat - Depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities. The polygons may consist of many individual species or natural communities.

NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscapes – buffers and connects the Core Habitat polygons and identifies large, naturally vegetated blocks that are relatively free from the impact of roads and other development. The quality of undeveloped land considered in the landscape analysis was evaluated based on four major components: natural vegetation patch characteristics, size of relatively road less areas, sub watershed integrity, and contribution to buffering Bore Habitat for plants and exemplary communities.

NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife – shows estimations of the habitats of state-protected rare wildlife populations that occur in Resource areas. These habitats are based on rare species records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species – shows areas that represent estimations of important state-listed rare species habitats in Massachusetts. These habitats are based in rare species population records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

Riparian Corridors – shows a 100-meter corridor, which encompasses perennial streams and river features. The 100 meter buffer distance is a subjective value derived from existing conservation plans, as well as current literature. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Vernal Pools – shows a 100-foot buffer around NHESP Certified Vernal Pools. Certified Vernal Pools are protected if they fall under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations. They also are afforded protection under the state Water Quality Certification regulations, the state Title 5 regulations, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act regulations.

Community

Developed

Commercial Land – shows land that is classified as commercial in the most recent land use update.

Gravel Pits / Mining - shows land that is classified as Gravel / Mining in the most recent land use update.

Industrial Land – shows land that is classified as industrial in the most recent land use update. Industrial land is defined as Industrial, Mining, and Waste Disposal.

Multi-Family Residential - shows land that is classified as Multi-Family residential in the most recent land use update.

Residential Land – shows land that is classified as residential in the most recent land use update. Residential land is defined as lots smaller than ¼ acre lots, ¼ to ½ acre lots, lots larger than ½ acre, and multi-family lots.

State Registered Historic Resources – shows land that is listed with the State Register of Historic Places as being of historical interest.

Village / Commercial Centers – an area defined by the community as representing the village or community center.

Non-Developed Land

Agriculture Land – shows land classified as agriculture in the most recent land use update. Land that is defined as agriculture is composed of cropland, pasture, and woody perennial.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction Land – shows land that is permanently protected as agricultural land due to an APR designation

Buildable Land – shows land that was determined to be buildable based upon existing development, protection, and restricted land during the 1999/2000 Buildout Analysis

Forested Land – shows land that is classified as forest in the most recent land use update.

Non-Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space, but is not permanently protected.

Partial Constraints – shows land that is buildable but is limited based on land characteristics, such as slope, wetlands, and proximity to water.

Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space and is permanently protected.

Recreational Resources – shows land that is classified as recreational in the most recent land use update. Recreational land is defined as Participation Recreation, Spectator Recreation and Water based Recreation.

Housing and Population Densities

Owner Housing Density – The percentage of housing that is owned by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Population Density - The population of the census block on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Rental Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is rented by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Seasonal Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is seasonal on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Infrastructure

Roads

Dirt / Unpaved Roads – roads that are considered dirt or unpaved based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Local Roads – roads that are considered local roads based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Minor Roads – roads that are considered collectors based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Major Roads / Highway Access – roads that are considered arterials or interstate on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Other Transportation

Para Transit – This data layer is only useful for regional analysis. A town that is a member of BRTA receives para transit

Transit access – Roads that have existing BRTA bus service.

Rail Access – Existing rail lines that are currently used.

Air Access – The area surrounding the airports that are considered part of the airport complex.

Bike Trails – The Ashuwillticook bike trail from Lanesborough/Pittsfield line to downtown Adams.

Utilities

Public Water – a line approximating the location of the public water lines. This data was verified by DPW staff during summer of 2001.

Sewer – a line approximating the location of the sewer lines. This data was verified by DPW staff during summer of 2001.

Solid Waste Facilities – Compiled by DEP to track the locations of landfills, transfer stations, and combustion facilities.

Bureau of Waste Prevention

Major Facilities – facilities that are regulated by the DEP. These are considered to have the greatest environmental significance. Facilities included are:

- Large Quantity Generators of Hazardous Waste
- Large Quantity Toxic Users
- Hazardous Waste Recyclers
- Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and / or Disposal Facilities
- Facilities with Air Operating Permits
- Facilities with Groundwater Discharge Permits

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



GIS Maps

GIS Mapping

Introduction to GIS Mapping
Introduction to Development Suitability Maps
Base Maps

8

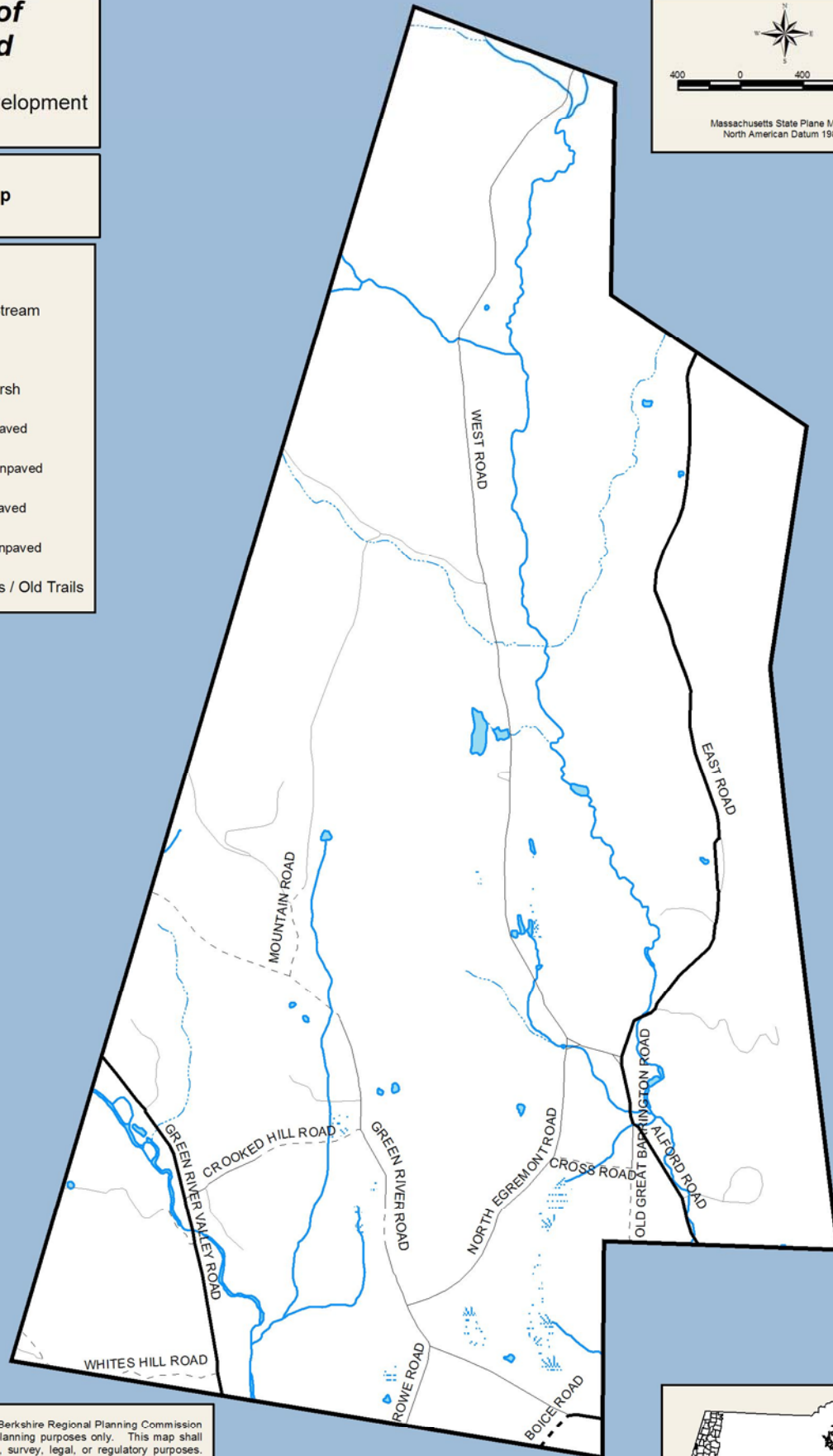
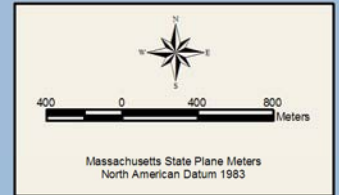
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82

Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Base Map

-  Stream
-  Intermittent Stream
-  Lake / Pond
-  Wetland / Marsh
-  Minor Road - Paved
-  Minor Road - Unpaved
-  Local Road - Paved
-  Local Road - Unpaved
-  Private Roads / Old Trails

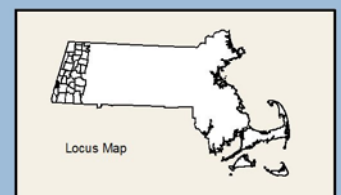


This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.



February 5, 2003
/cop/alf/projects/basemap.mxd



Town of Alford

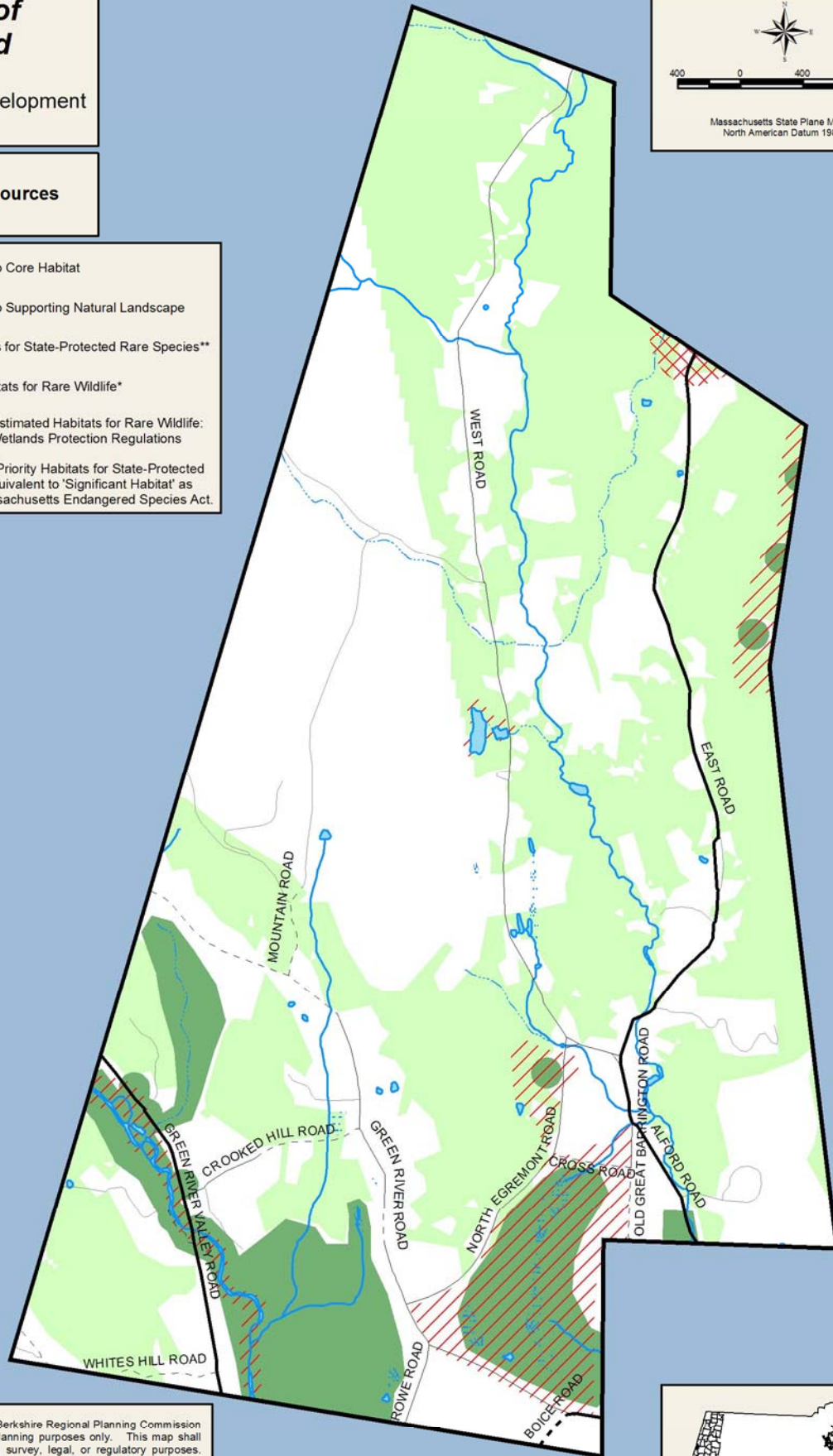
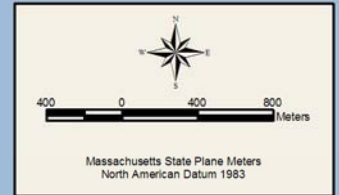
Community Development Plan

Biological Resources

-  NHESP BioMap Core Habitat
-  NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape
-  Priority Habitats for State-Protected Rare Species**
-  Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife*

* NHESP 1999-2001 Estimated Habitats for Rare Wildlife:
For Use with the MA Wetlands Protection Regulations
(310 CMR 10).

** NHESP 1999-2001 Priority Habitats for State-Protected
Rare Species: NOT equivalent to 'Significant Habitat' as
designated under Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

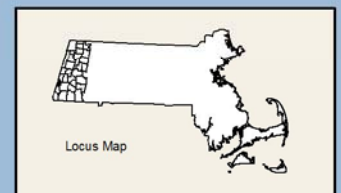


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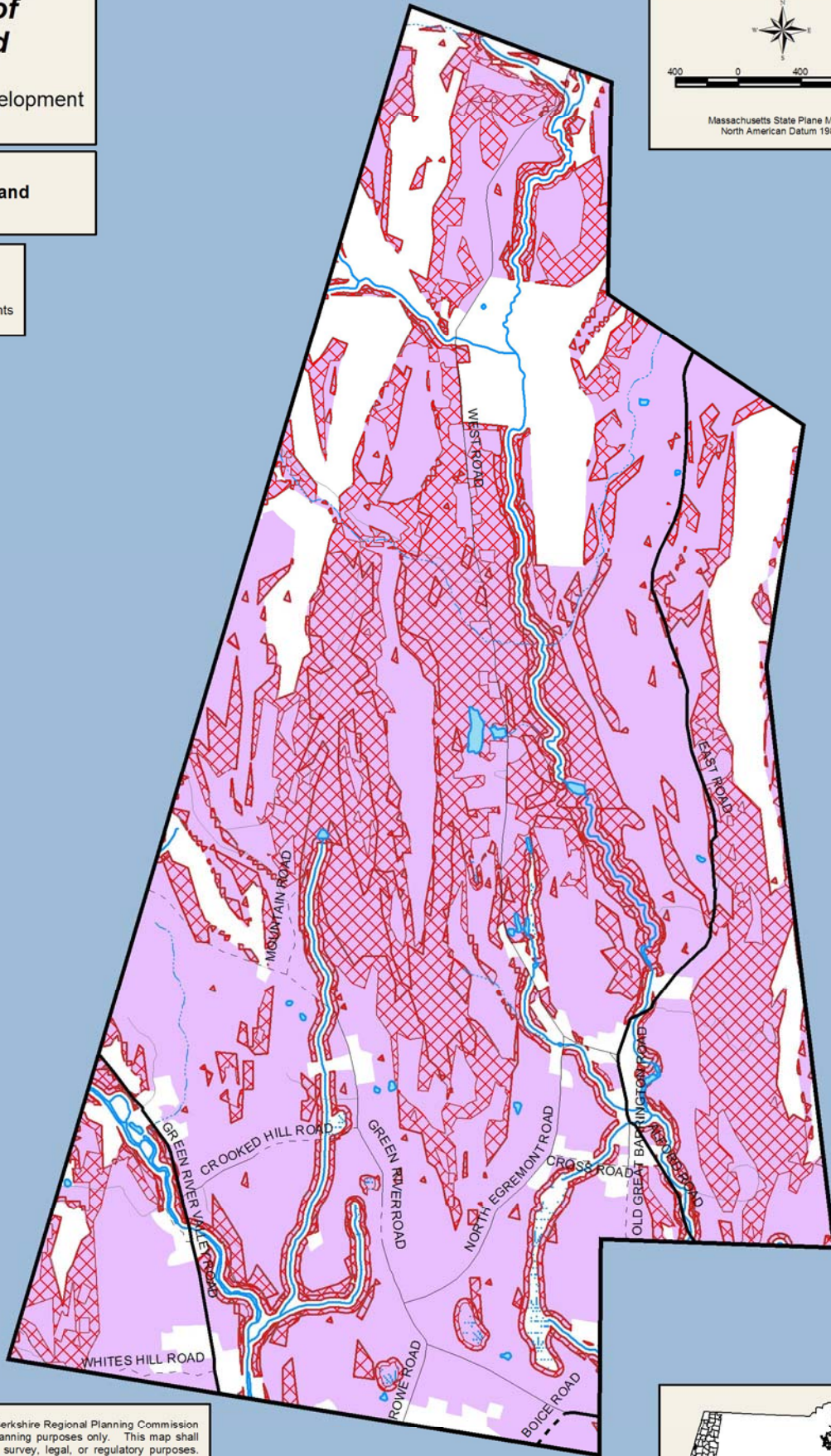
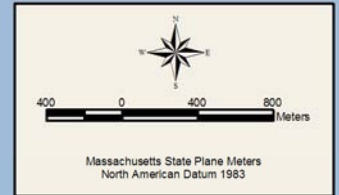
February 5, 2003
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Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Buildable Land

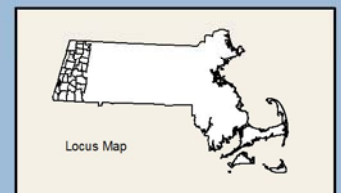


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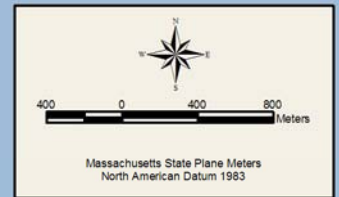
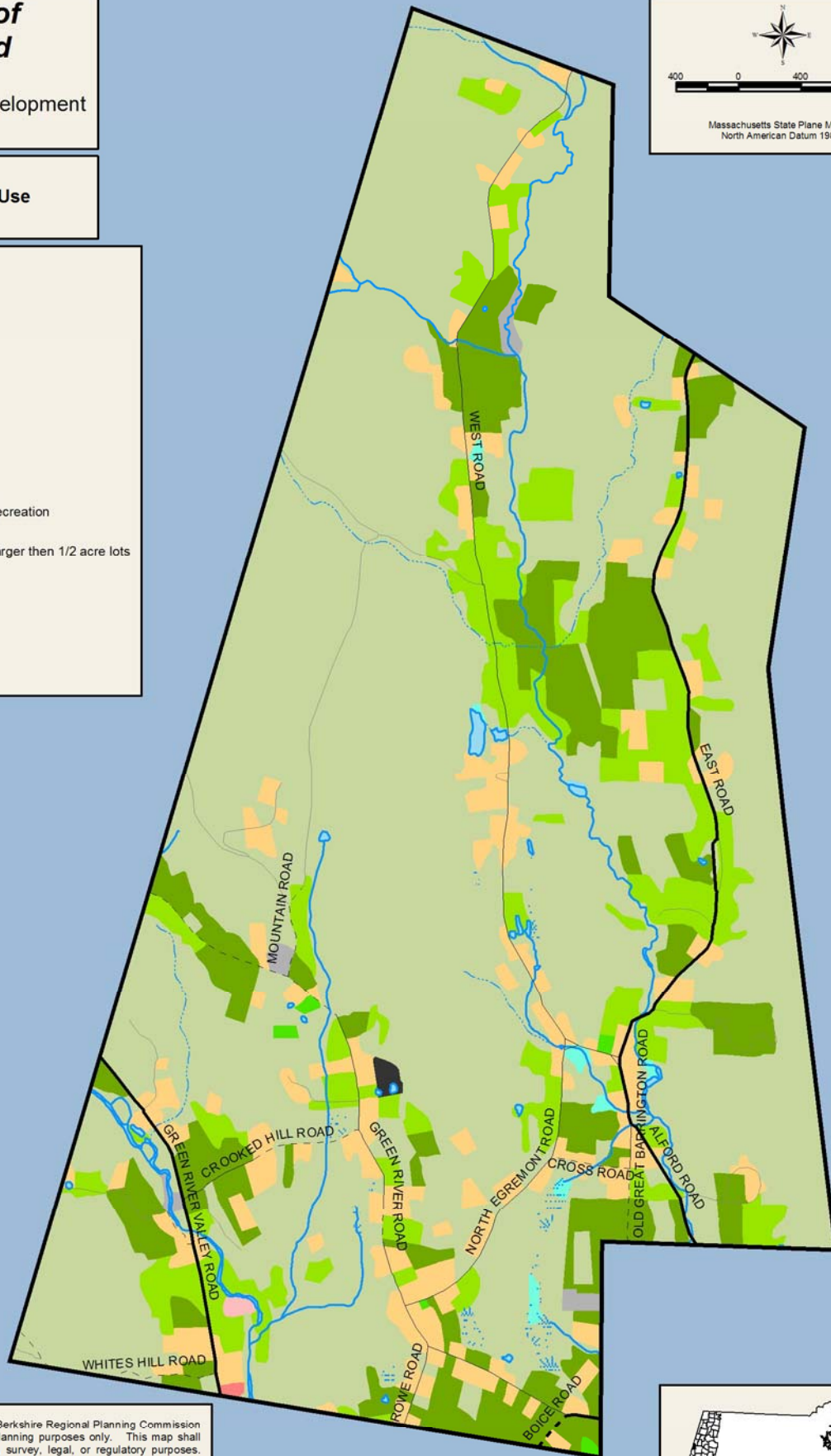
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Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

1999 Land Use

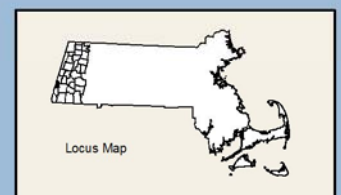


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Town of Alford

Community Development
Plan

Current Zoning

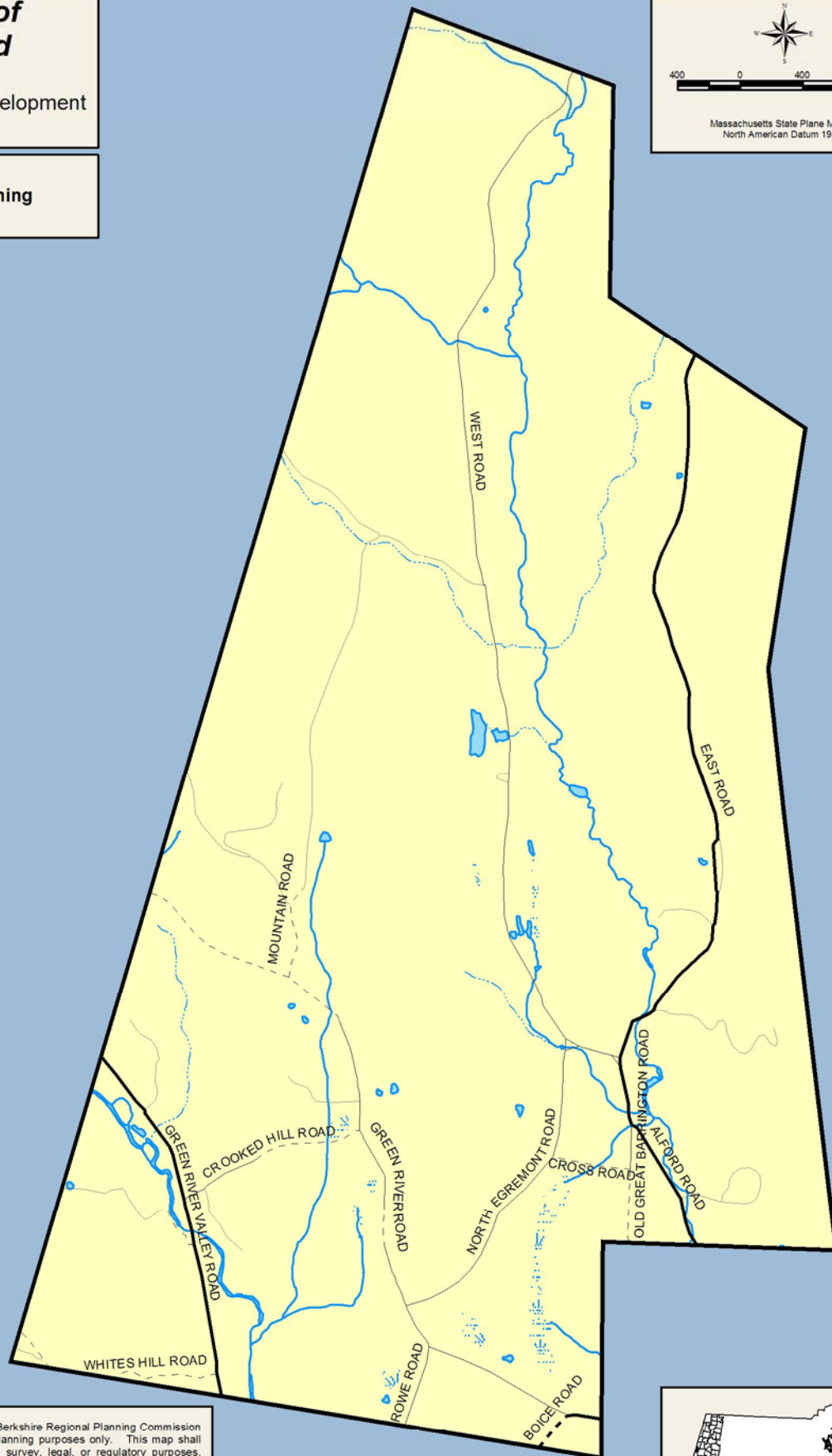
Zone Name

All



400 0 400 800
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



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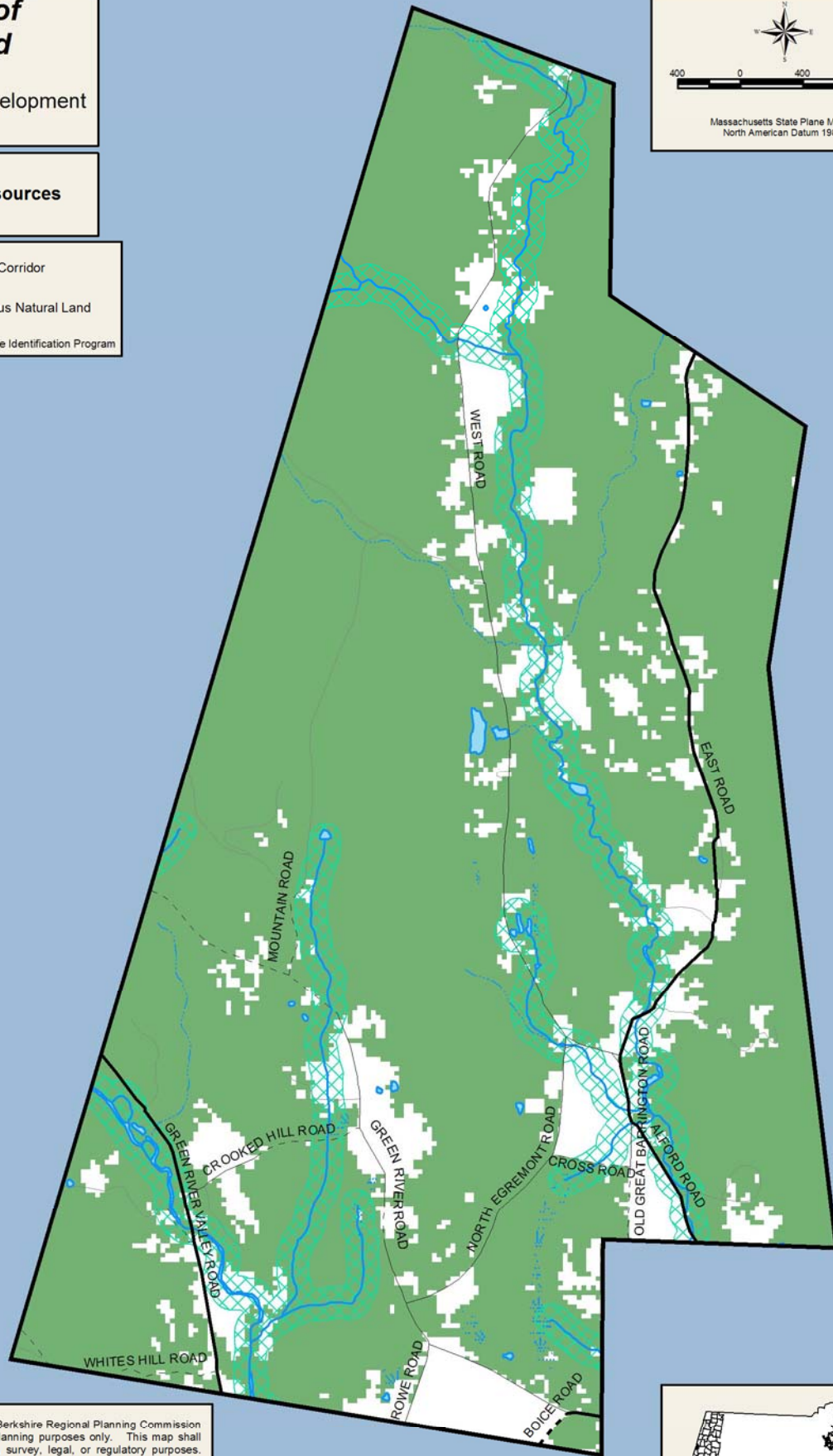
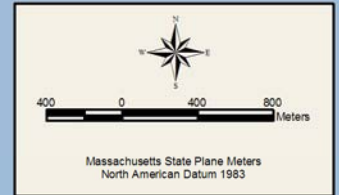
Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Ecological Resources

-  MRIP Riparian Corridor
-  MRIP Contiguous Natural Land

MRIP - Massachusetts Resource Identification Program

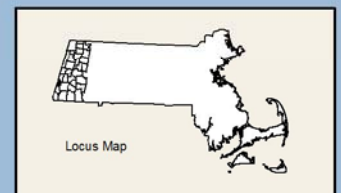


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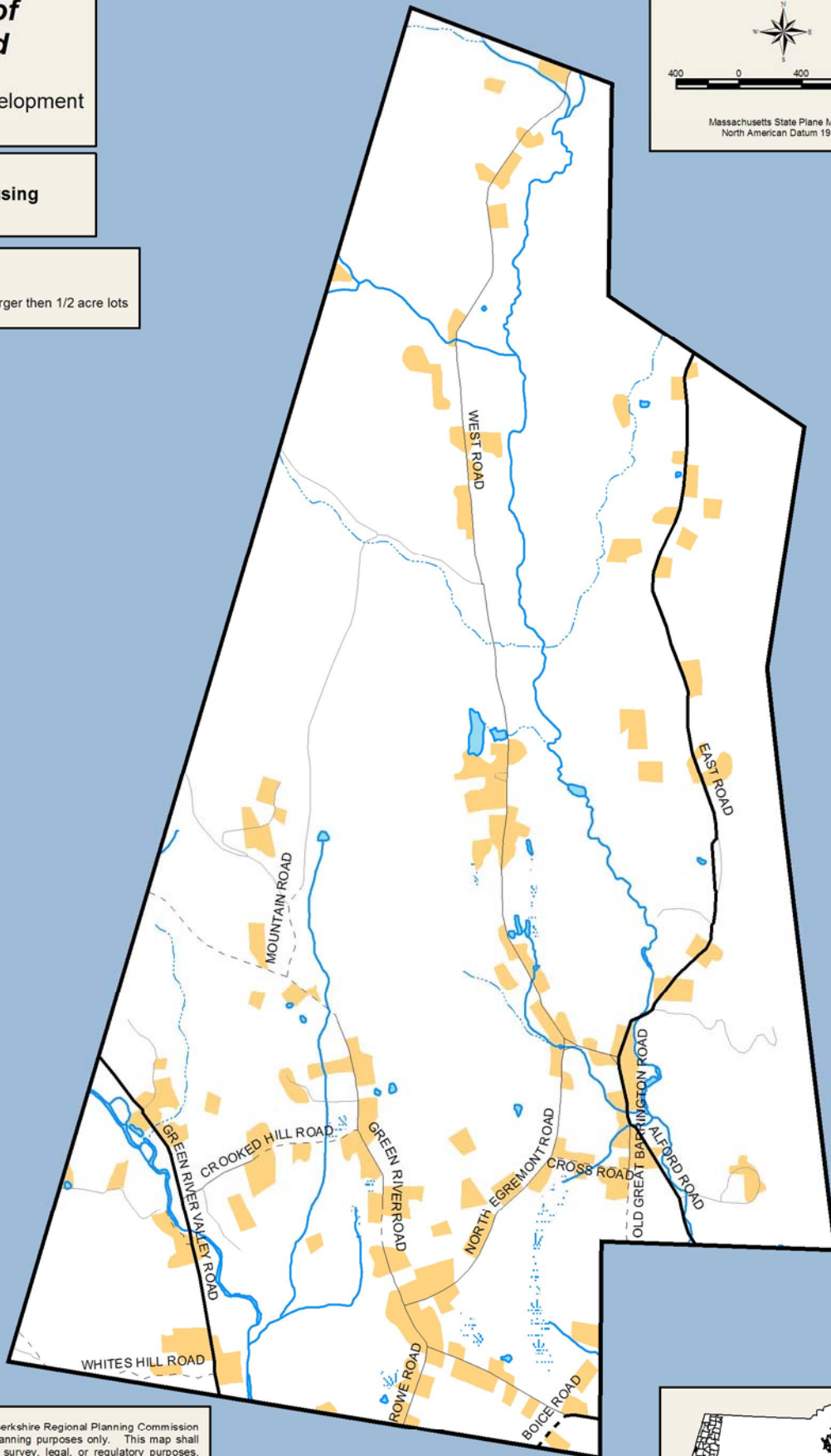
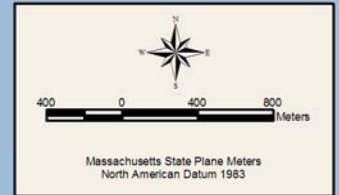
Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Existing Housing

Residential Lot Size

 Residential - Larger than 1/2 acre lots

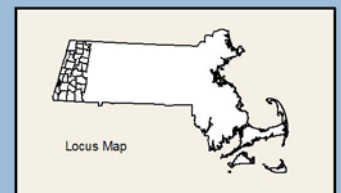


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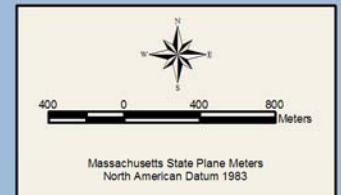
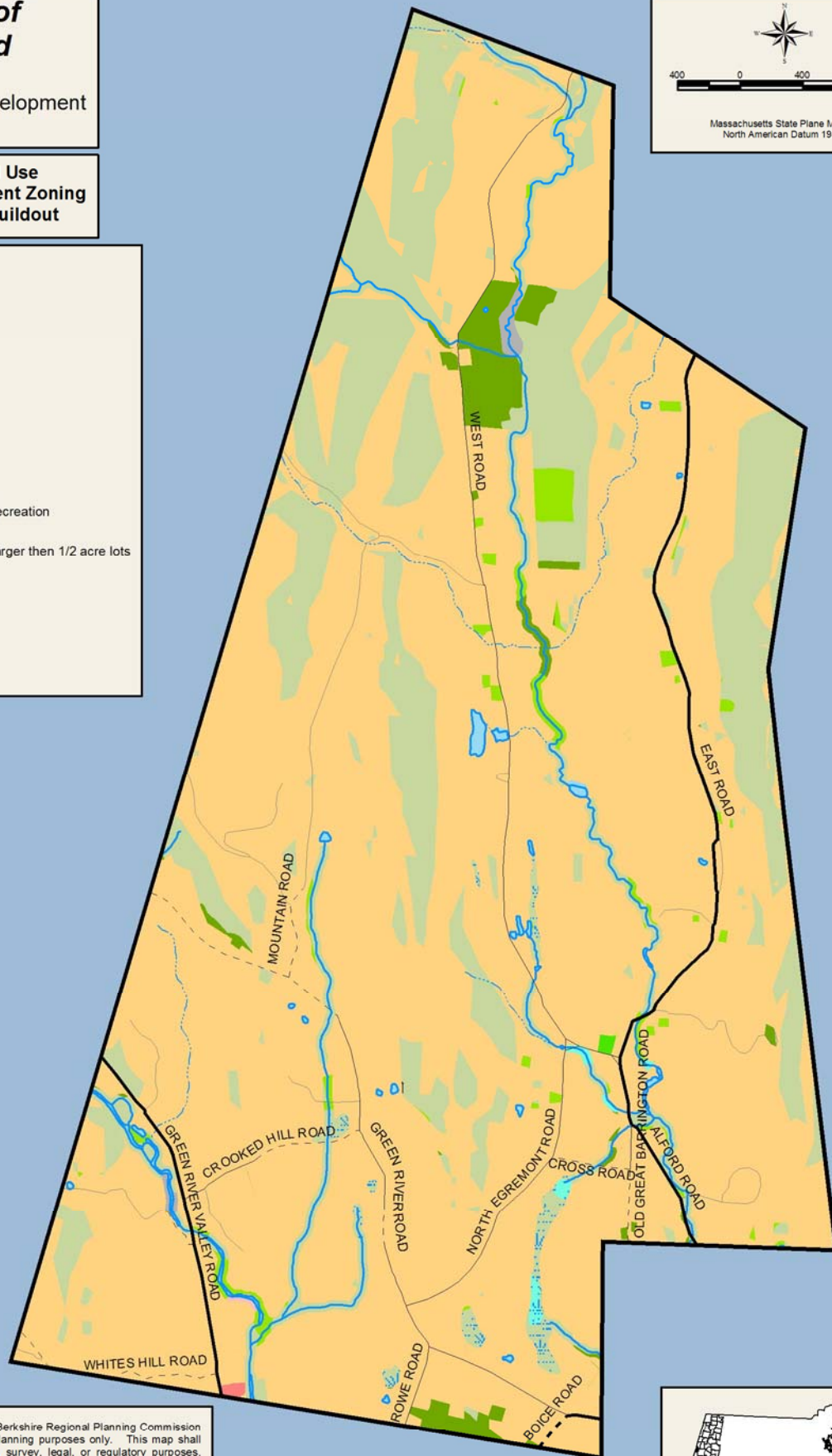
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Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Future Land Use based upon Current Zoning at Maximum Buildout

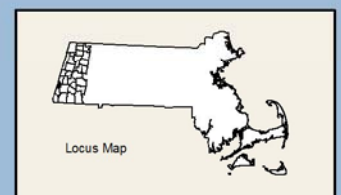


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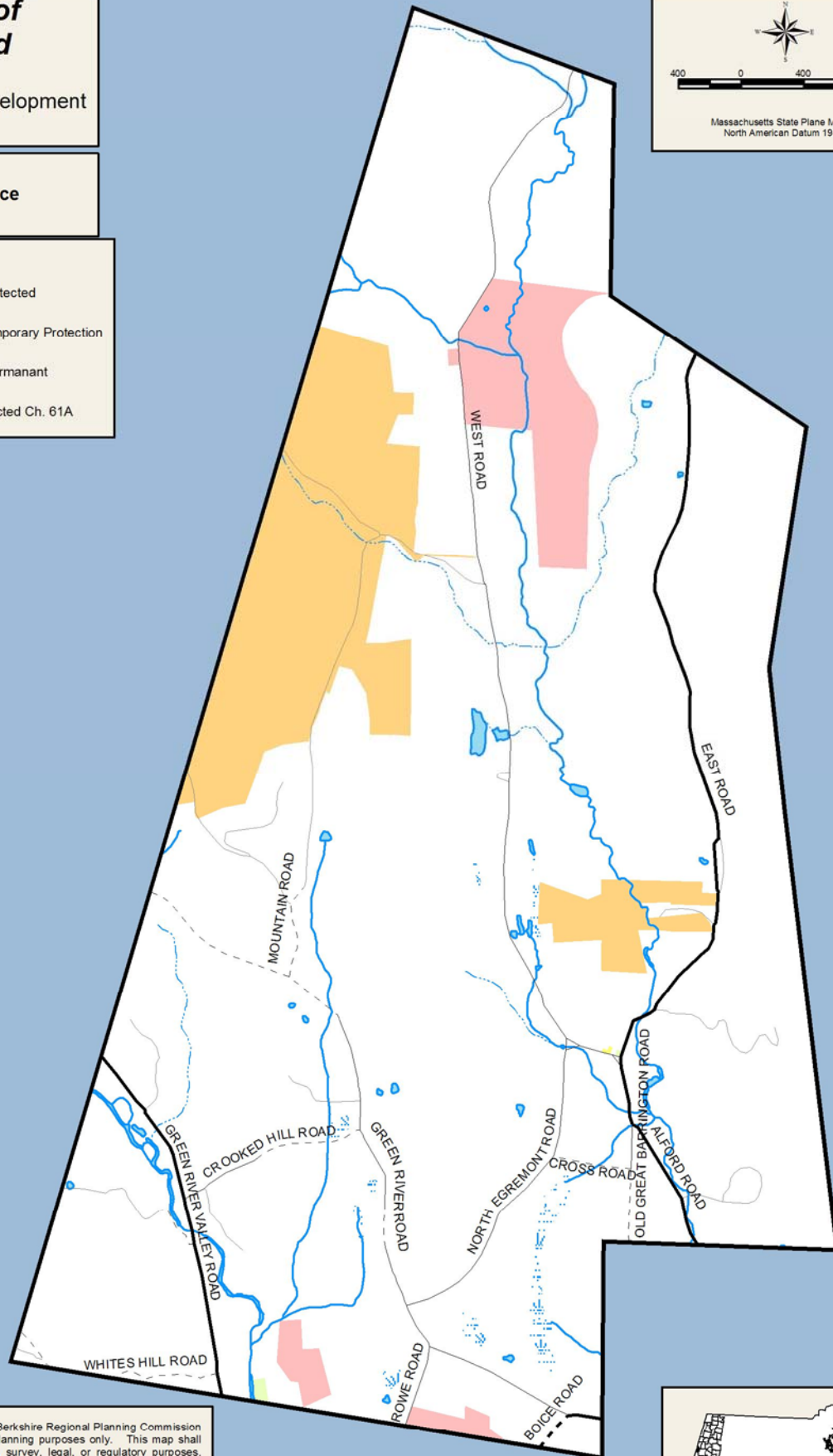
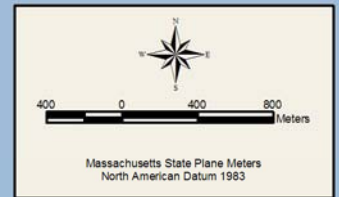
Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Open Space

Open Space Status

- Municipal - Protected
- Municipal- Temporary Protection
- Non-Profit - Permanent
- Private - Protected Ch. 61A

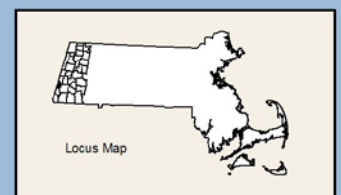


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June 3, 2003
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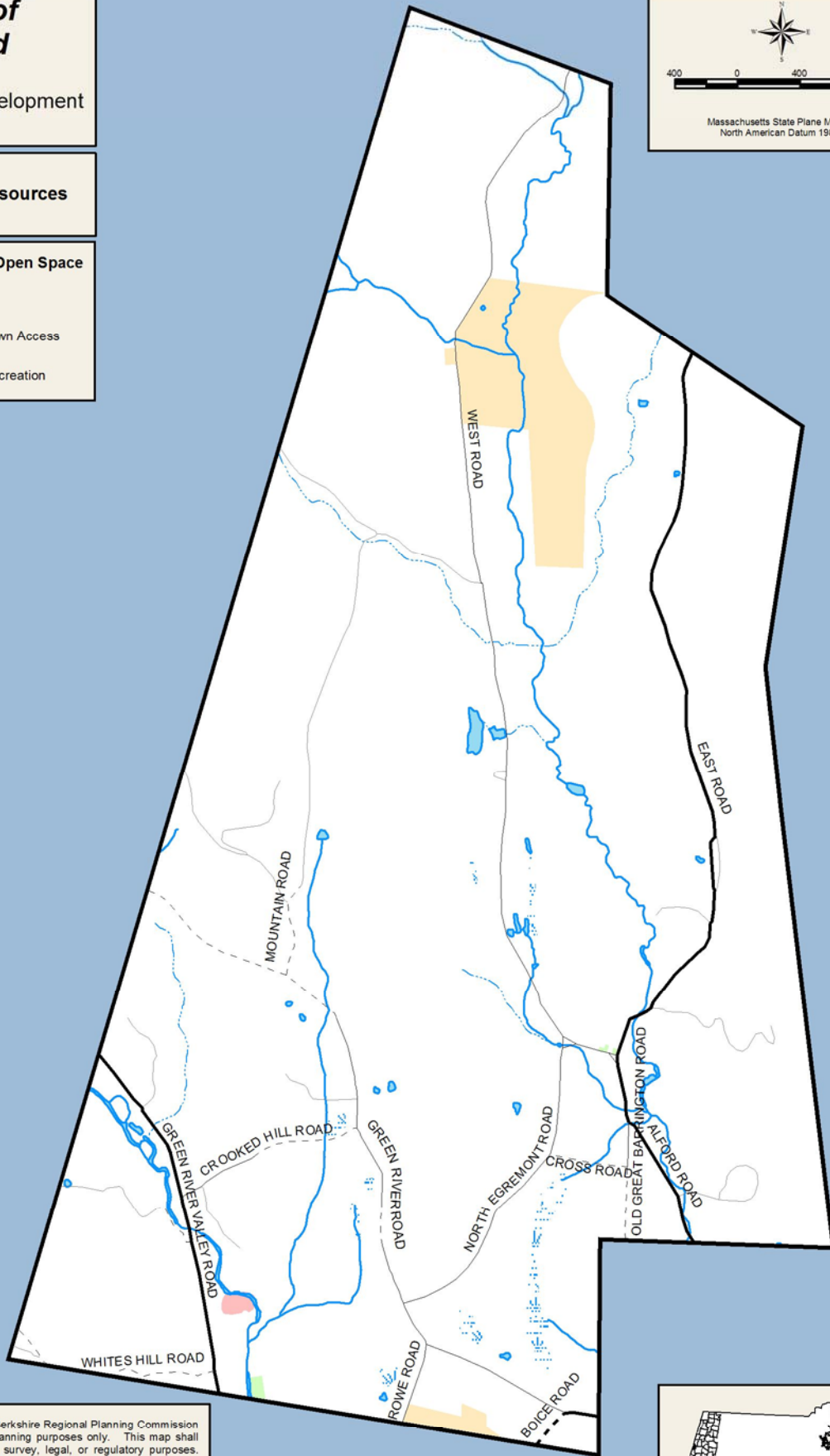
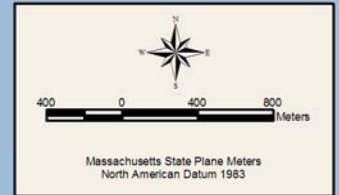
Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Recreational Resources

Publicly Accessible Open Space

- Municipal
- Private - Unknown Access
- Participation Recreation

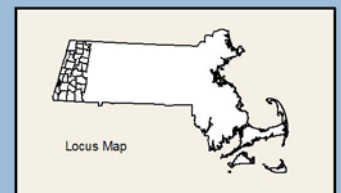


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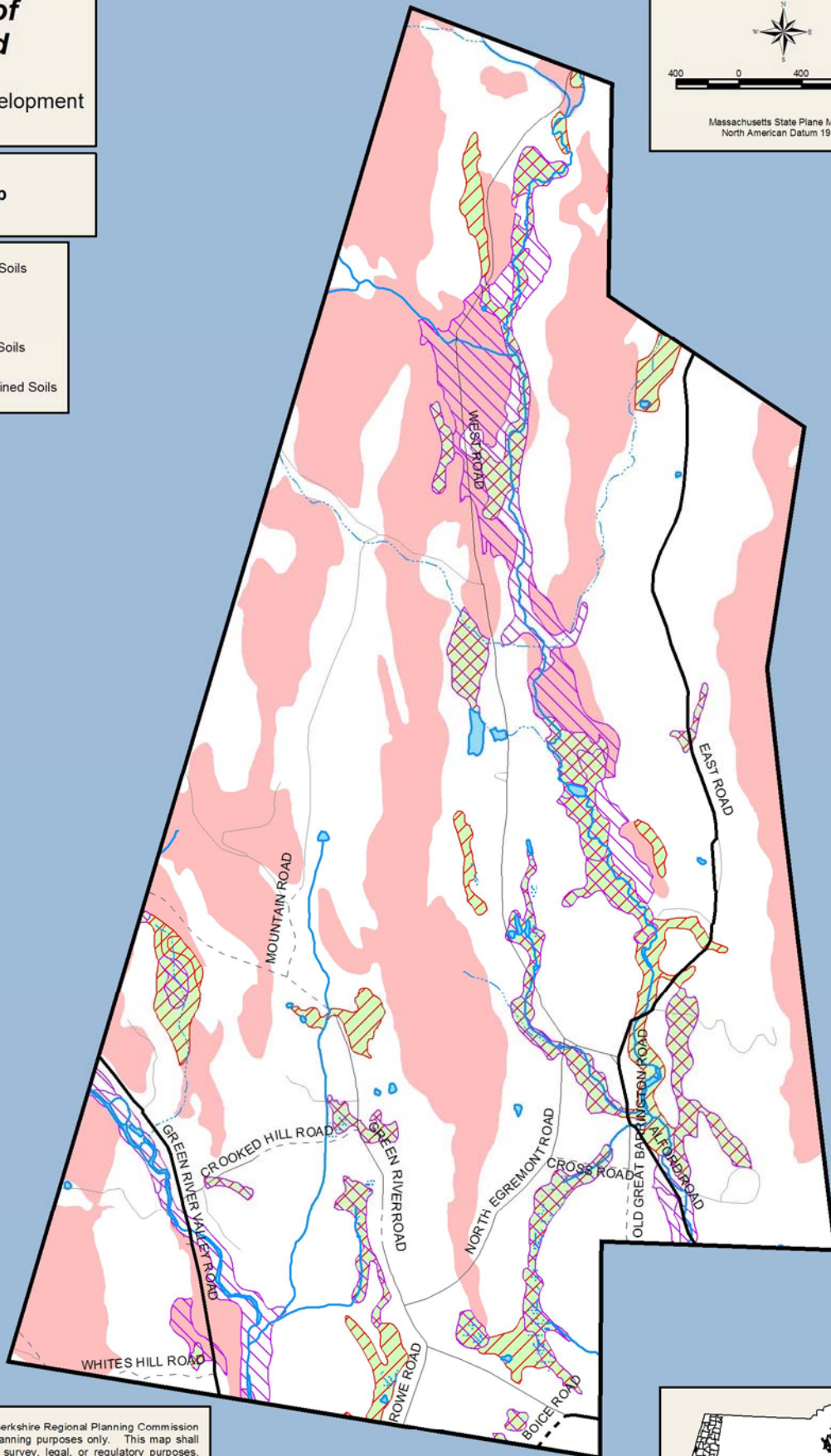
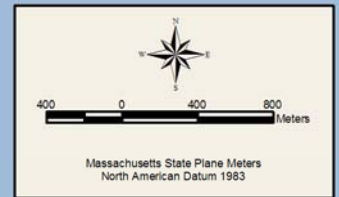


Town of Alford

Community Development
Plan

Soils Map

-  Highly Erodible Soils
-  Hydric Soils
-  Poorly Drained Soils
-  Excessively Drained Soils

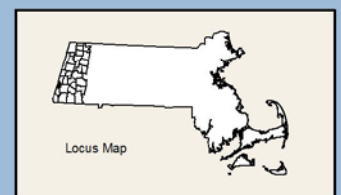


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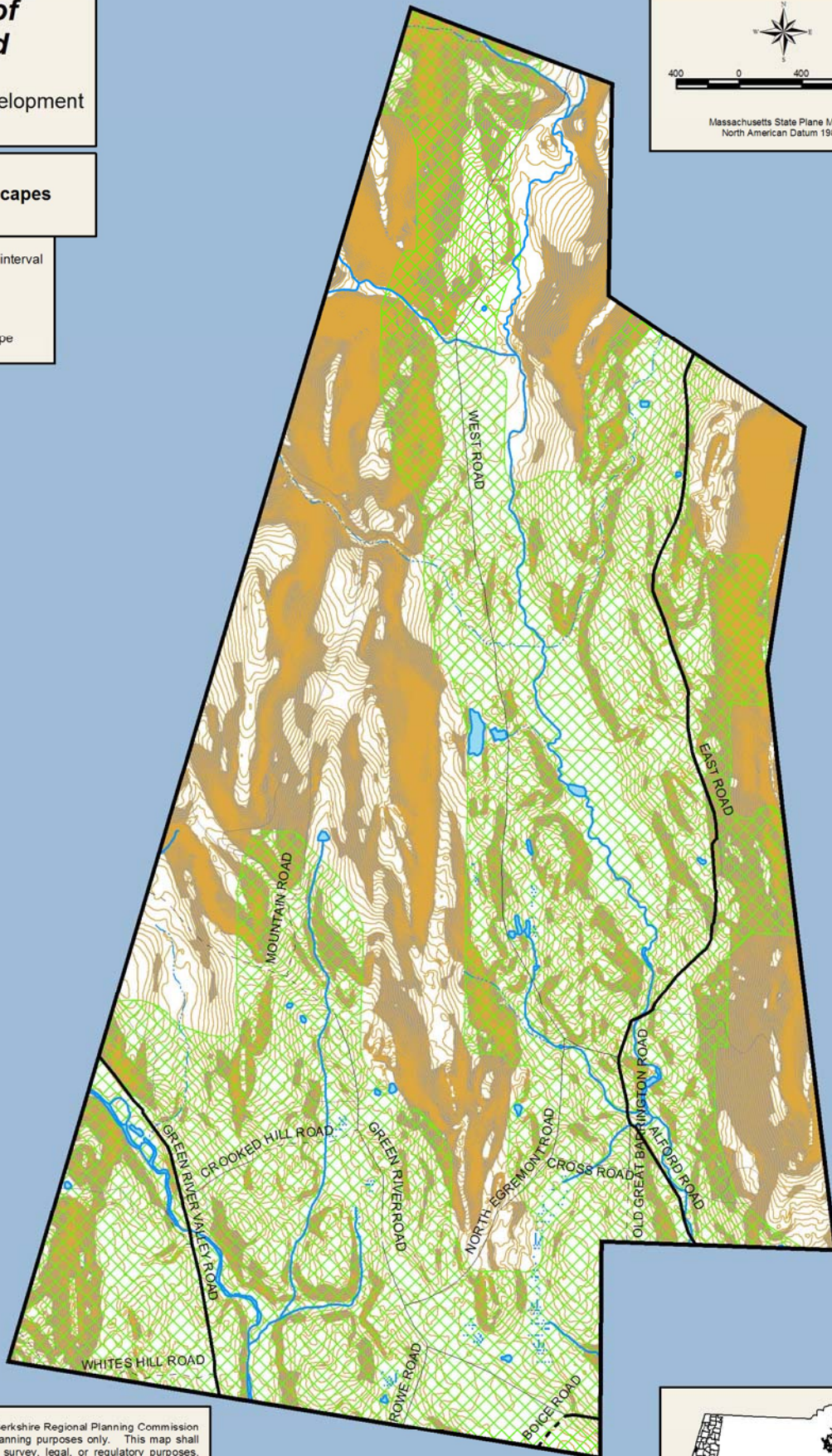
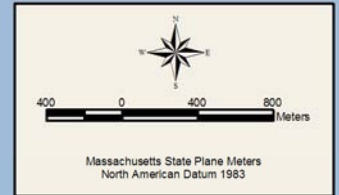


Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Special Landscapes

-  Contours - 10m interval
-  Slope > 15%
-  Scenic Landscape

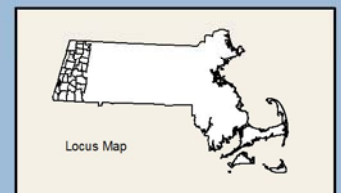


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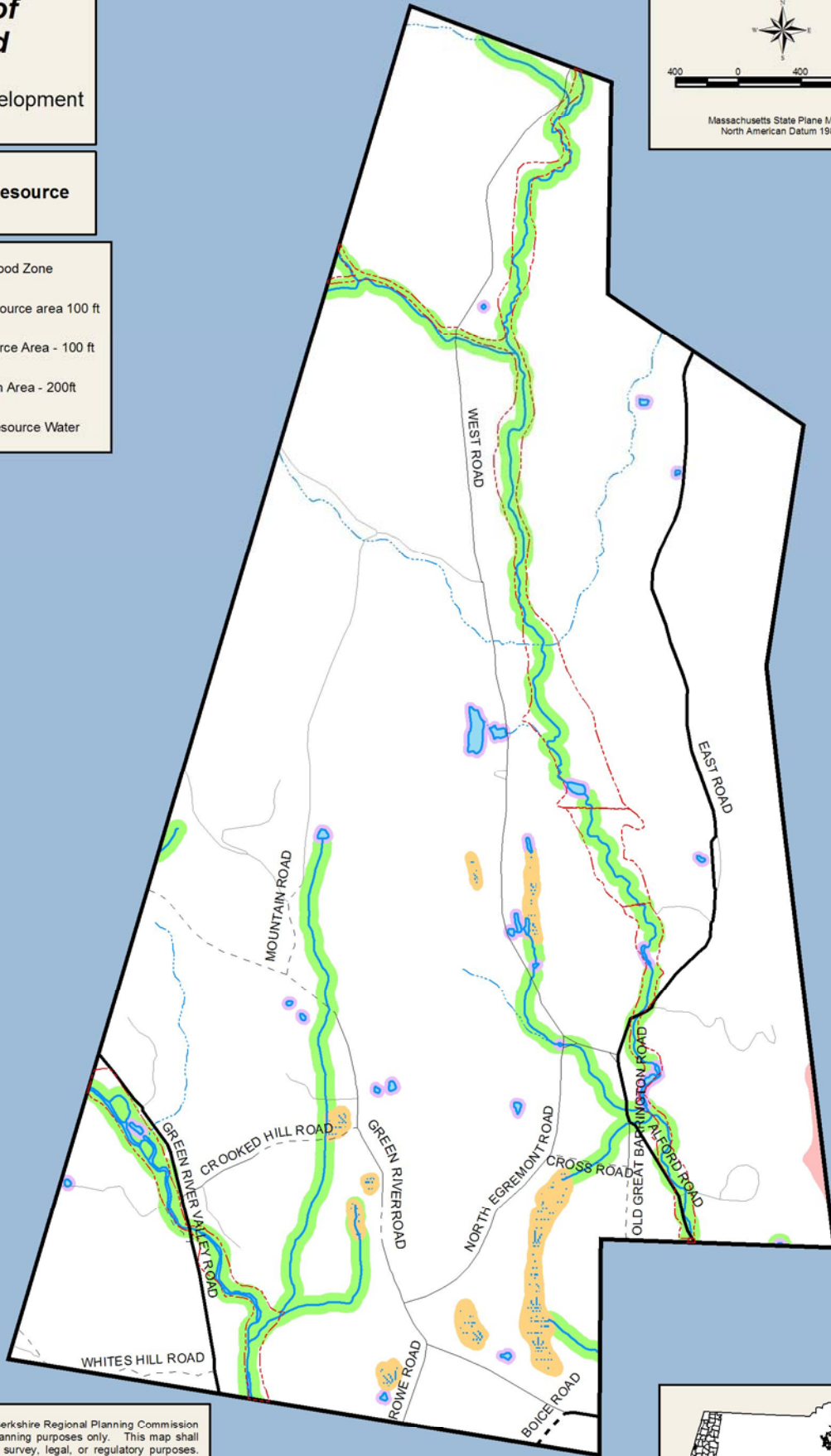
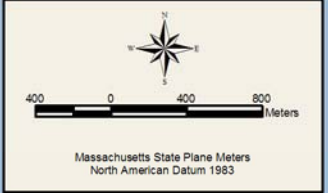


Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Surface Water Resource

- FEMA 100yr Flood Zone
- Lake/Pond Resource area 100 ft
- Wetland Resource Area - 100 ft
- River Protection Area - 200ft
- Outstanding Resource Water

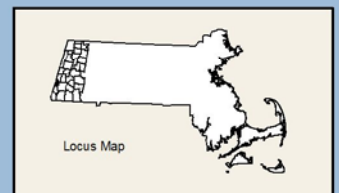


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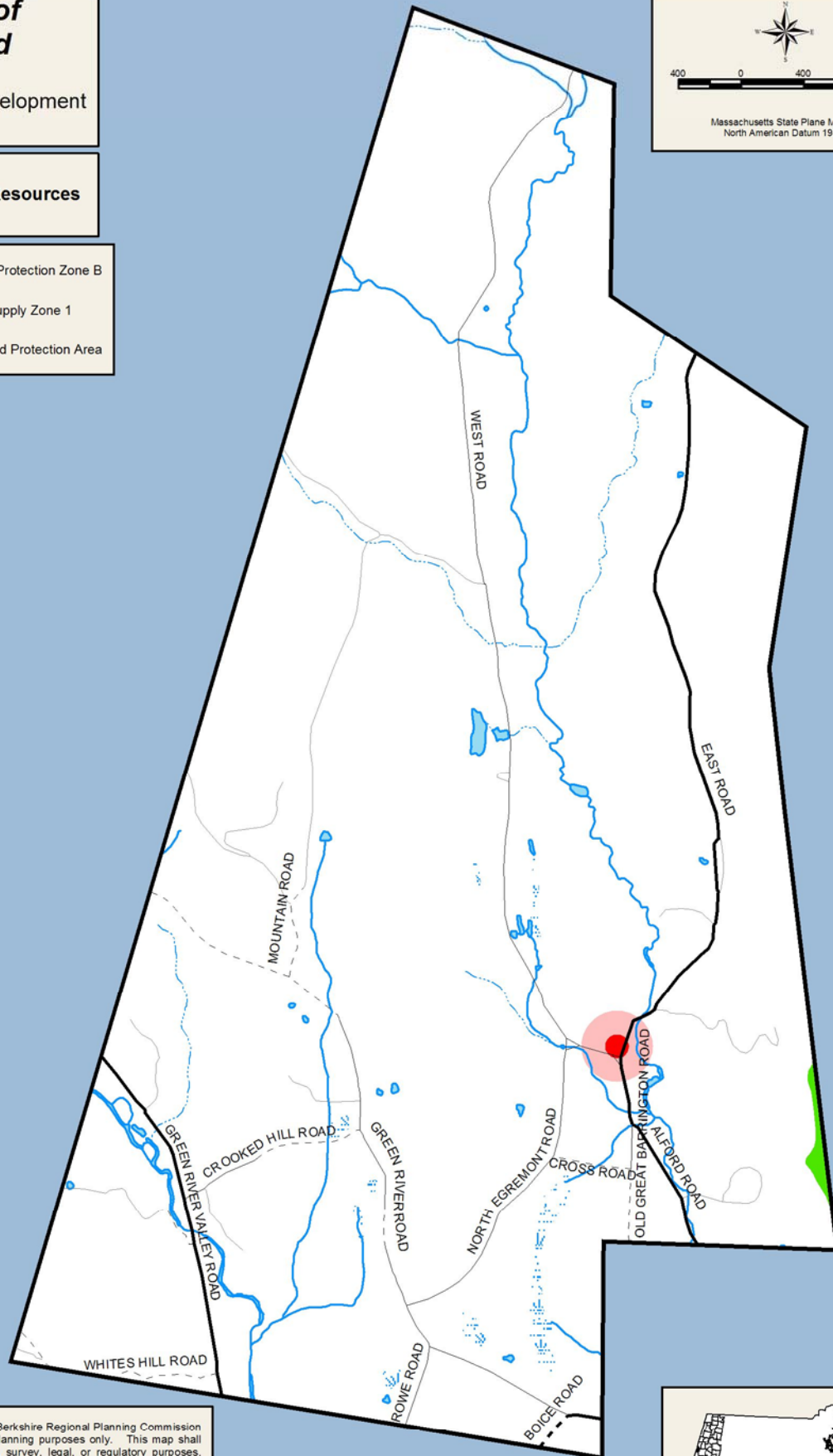
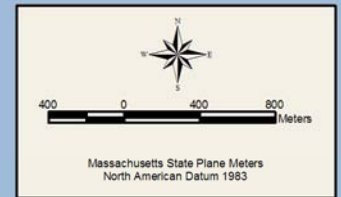


Town of Alford

Community Development Plan

Drinking Water Resources

-  Surface Water Protection Zone B
-  Public Water Supply Zone 1
-  Interim Wellhead Protection Area

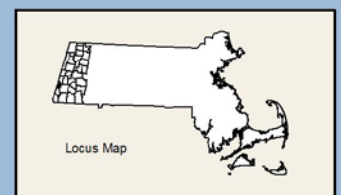


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February 5, 2003
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF Alford



Appendix



Appendices

Appendix A: Five Family Farm	96
Appendix B: Public Participation	110
Appendix C: Economic Profile	114
Appendix D: Housing Profile	128

Town of Alford, Massachusetts

Community Vision Statement

(Draft December 3, 2002)

In accomplishing a Community Development Plan for our town, we intend to foster broad participation in the local decision-making process, and together with our fellow citizens develop a vision for our common future. We hope to:

- Mindfully guide and manage growth to ensure Alford preserves the rural character, scenic vistas, and pastoral nature that make it a desirable place to live.
- Maintain and improve our local economy by identifying and cultivating economic opportunities that are consistent with our rural character and agricultural heritage.
- Maintain and improve our social well-being by providing our seniors and citizens of modest income with quality community services and affordable housing opportunities.
- Maintain and improve our civic infrastructure by providing our residents with quality municipal services.

ASSETS & LIABILITIES INVENTORY

(Draft December 3, 2002)

Alford is a classic New England village with historic buildings and byways, exceptional natural assets and rural character. The community wishes to protect critical open spaces for scenic, environmental, agricultural and historic purposes. The community also wishes to plan growth and economic development that are consistent with the natural character of the town.

Agriculture is a large part of Alford's history and is viewed as an environmental asset. The community wishes to foster agriculture as a means of preserving open space, preserving the rural character of the town, and preserving town history.

Alford's housing needs are similar to many other communities in the region. There has been a growing need for affordable housing as second generation Alford residents have no access to rental property within the town and cannot afford to purchase property within town. Alford has lost a generation of young adults who can't afford to live in the community in which they were raised. The town is interested in seeing that a variety of housing needs are met as real estate prices rise, mainly due to the growing second home-owner market.

Alford will be challenged to improve housing opportunities and create a wider range of housing availability without fostering the rapid development of valued open space, agriculture or scenic views and ridgelines. Residents of Alford also hope to preserve historic buildings through the prevention of premature demolition.

Alford has historically been an agricultural community. The community has identified a need to promote the economic development of agriculture while preserving historic uses and the natural beauty of the rural town. It is recognized that although some agriculture is flourishing there has been a decline in the number of working farms within Alford.

The community has expressed an interest in exploring options for new and existing cottage industries. Although the town wishes to maintain existing commercial and community services without expanding or creating a business district that could threaten the its unique pastoral character. Home-based businesses could be encouraged to increase the potential for residents to live and work in Alford without threatening its rural character. The community recognizes the need to plan accordingly and minimize barriers where appropriate.

Long-range transportation improvements must incorporate the vision that Alford has for its future and plan accordingly to accommodate future housing developments along town roads, and safety concerns of pedestrians and bicyclists.

ASSETS & LIABILITY INVENTORY MATRIX

CORE ELEMENT	POSSIBLE ASSETS	POSSIBLE LIABILITIES
HOUSING	• 3,395 acres are developable or have houses on them • Community consensus to provide a wider range of housing opportunities • Community consensus to provide housing opportunities for year-round residents • Historic buildings	• Lack of assisted living, retirement, or nursing care housing for seniors • Much available land is considered too steep for development • Second home market driving up costs for year-round residents • Median sales price for homes in Alford in 2002 was \$218,750 - 87% higher than the median sales price for Berkshire County • No public sewer and water system • Large road frontage and minimum lot sizes required for 2-family housing, 2-family housing requires special permit, no multi-family housing allowed
OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION	• Town has passed local Scenic Mountain Act regulations • Town has expressed interest in the development of an Open Space Plan	• Large amounts of unprotected open spaces, with only 3% of total land area permanently protected • No inventory to identify environmentally sensitive or scenic areas to be preserved • No public sewer and water system • No local wetlands regulations
TRANSPORTATION	• Good road conditions and effective maintenance	• No official map for guiding ANR development • Existing development taking up frontage on many roadways. • No access to public transportation
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	• Current zoning allows for cottage industry and home-based business • Community consensus to foster agriculture for economic purposes among others	• Loss of local agriculture industry • Few jobs available within the town boundary • Belief that creation of commercial enterprises would permanently alter the community character

Please spread the word!

Alford Community Development Plan Meeting
Wednesday, March 19, 2003, 7:00-9:00pm
at Alford Town Hall

Purpose of Meeting:

- *Launch the first element of the Community Development Plan — the Open Space Plan.
- *Learn what an open space plan is and why it is important to Alford. (Presentation by Senior Planner from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)
- *Learn the process of open space planning and how we will do it in Alford.
- *Agree on a system of communications for public input and participation in the planning process.
- *Hear a presentation from U-Mass Extension researchers who have done a biodiversity study of the Lower Housatonic River watershed that includes Alford.
- *Distribute educational materials.

For more information contact
Billie Best 413-644-8971 or billie@billiebest.com

* * * * *

Open Space Planning Process

- *Establish community goals
 - Document public participation
 - Survey of all town residents, fulltime and part-time -----Analyze and report survey results
- *Statement of purpose *Community description/background *Environmental inventory and analysis -----Biodiversity -----Review of local environmental by-laws *Inventory lands of conservation and recreation interest *Perform needs analysis *Analyze local zoning regulations with respect to open space and natural resource protection -----Identify conflicts between open space priorities and zoning -----Recommend changes to zoning *Map existing environmental and land use resources -----Map protected and unprotected lands, and land suitable for future development -----Get community input on maps -----Based on findings and community discussion, create Land Suitability Map and Final Open Space and Water Resource Report *Identify locations for future protection -----Develop EO418 required GIS maps *Develop multi-year action plan
- *Compile listing of references *Prepare summary of findings

Dear Community Development Plan Advisory Group:

Our March 19th launch of the Open Space Plan process at Alford Town Hall was well attended (there were 15 of us). The presentation by the field biologists from UMass was very well received. Bryan Boeskin, Senior Planner from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, highlighted the purpose and benefits of open space planning, and introduced us to Kasey Rolih and Laurie Sanders, research associates for the UMass Biodiversity Project.

Kasey and Laurie presented us with the results of the UMass biodiversity study of the Lower Housatonic River Watershed and a software program, the Conservation and Priority Assessment System (CAPS). CAPS combine Ariel photographs of the region with layers of other types of information, called filters. Using the software, we looked at Alford through many different filters including water systems, geological formations, soil types, wildlife habitat, forest types, plant species, topography, current land use, assessor's plot map, and roadways.

Ideally, the CAPS software program is designed to support community decision-making. It was easy to see how the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, or the Alford Land Trust might use CAPS. I have asked the Biodiversity Project to provide Alford with a copy of the CAPS software. Will Ryan has the complementary software required to use CAPS, and has offered to run CAPS on his computer. I have offered to document Alford's use of CAPS and report back to the Biodiversity Project as a way of helping them build a persuasive case for funding future development of CAPS for other regions.

The next step for the Community Development Plan is to design a survey of all town residents (fulltime and part-time) to collect input into the Open Space Plan prioritization process. In the next few weeks, I will be circulating survey drafts for your review. The survey will be mailed at the end of May with the goal of having results tabulated by the end of June. Results will be used to guide our open space preservation strategy.

On another front, our Selectmen have agreed to fund an Alford website that would allow us to post many of the Community Development Plan documents and maps online for public access. I would like to have some photos of Alford for the site. If you have photos of Alford to contribute, please email me the low-resolution jpeg (no more than 80kb).

Thanks for being involved.

Billie
644-8971

Alford Open Space Planning Meeting
Saturday, July 19, 2003
10am - 12 noon
Alford Town Hall

Agenda

- Announce & Discuss Town Survey Results
- Hear Alford Natural Resources Inventory Report from UMass Extension Biology Field Researchers (including slide presentation and Arcview ariel photograph GIS software)
- Discuss Priorities for Preservation (including parsonage building next to town hall, wetlands behind town hall and Tom Ball Mountain area)

NEWS FLASH!

Thursday, Dec. 4th, 2003, 7:00-9:00pm

Community Development Plan Advisory Group
Meeting on Alford Open Space Plan
with Laurie Sanders
(Biology Field Researcher for UMass Extension Natural Resources &
Environmental Conservation Program)

Agenda:

Demonstration of Alford decision-support resources on ArcView software,
by Will Ryan Develop goals and objectives for open space plan
Prioritize 5-year plan Set next steps

Plan to identify natural and historic resources for preservation. Some
of the ideas that have already been discussed are:

- Developing the Alford Center wetlands as a wildlife management area
with amenities such as a boardwalk, a wild life viewing area, and bench
seating. This would entail working with abutters, defining and
designing the space, creating a conservation area, and a management
plan.
- Restoring the historic Alford Village Church in Alford Center.
- Restoring the historic Alford Town Hall in Alford Center.
- Applying for National Historic District designation for Alford
Center.
- Working with Alford's farmers to ensure their farms are viable and
that their lands remain farmland.
- Considering scenic by-ways zoning to preserve the character of
Alford's country roadscapes.
- Identifying a suitable location for a public park with ballfields
near Alford Center.

All ideas are welcome.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Billie
644-8971



**Town of Alford
CDP Committee Meeting
January 7, 2004
7:00 pm @ Town Offices**

- I. Introductions of any new Committee members present and of BRPC staff (2 minutes)
- II. Brief Review of CDP Transportation Scope of Work (5 minutes)
- III. Discussion of Status of Roads and Official Map Planning (45 minutes)
 - a. Defining Status of Roads and Official Maps and discussion of pros and cons for each
 - b. Review of Alford Orthomap (aerial photograph with GIS overlay of MassHighway Road Inventory File), County Engineer's Map, Atlas Map and matrix of Alford Roads
 - c. Discussion of Roads in Question: public versus private ownership, right of access, maintenance and legal liabilities, land use implications
 - d. Discussion of steps required for Official Map approval and maintenance
- IV. Discussion of Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects in Alford (20 minutes)
 - a. Review newly published RTP and implications for Alford
 - b. Review pending reassessment of TIP criteria for small, rural municipalities
- V. Brief Discussion of Other Transportation Issues in Alford (10 minutes)
 - a. Traffic Flow
 - b. Speed control
 - c. Bike/ped considerations
 - d. Signage

Packet Items: CDP Transportation Scope Of Work, "Status of Roads and Official Maps" toolbox item (from *Berkshire Planning Tools*), Orthomap of Alford, County Engineer's Map, Atlas Map, Matrix of Alford Roads

Town of Alford
Community Development Plan Meeting
January 7, 2004
Alford Town Hall

Approximately a dozen people attended, including the fire chief, the Select Board chair, a Town Councilor and several of the people who e-mailed before the meeting.

We started the meeting by discussing the legal powers and responsibilities that come with adopting an Official Map. The Select Board chair said he would sign one, if it were adopted at Town Meeting, which we found encouraging. There seemed to be generally positive interest in doing an Official Map. The meeting then covered a rundown of all the roads in town. Bryan and I set up a digital projector and showed the attendees the orthomap of Alford on a large screen. I was able to zoom in and out on particular locations in the Town when questions arose. I was also able to update my working draft of a matrix of roads right there on the computer, as the fire chief and the Select Board chair noted roads that did not initially appear.

We also discussed some of the options available to the Town with regard to ATVs. I distributed a brief summary of a Q&A session I had earlier in the day with BRPC counsel Sally Bell. We discussed ATV by-laws (though she was unaware of any Towns with such by-laws), which could grant local officials authority to enforce illegal ATV activity (particularly important today since the Environmental Police are understaffed and underfunded and could probably never reach Alford in time to catch and enforce ATV violators). If the ATV violations occur regularly, or in a particular place, Sally recommended that property owners post prominent NO TRESPASSING signs and ask the State Police to patrol the area at appropriate times and more or less set up a sting. She believed that severe fines would serve as an example to other ATV violators. During the ATV discussion I also passed out a summary of the ATV laws printed out from the Environmental Police website.

I very briefly reviewed the Regional Transportation Plan and explained that the Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, which is the schedule governing the regional priorities for road work, is due for changes in prioritization criteria so that projects in small towns like Alford aren't regularly held in the 5-7 year slot. A question arose about a road that will most likely require upgrading in order to handle an increase in traffic due to a planned development. Since the development is a Form A, or ANR, the developer is not required to upgrade the Town's road leading to the development, and the attendees noted that the Town cannot really afford to improve the road on its own. Bryan told the attendees of a Small Towns Road Assistance Program (STRAP) grant that may serve the needs of the Town, though it remains to be seen if this particular project meets the eligibility requirements for that grant. We'll follow up on that....

As the meeting was wrapping up and others were leaving, Bryan and I discussed with the Fire Chief the possibility of providing a digital copy of the orthomap, like the one we'd used during the meeting, to the fire department to help in locating actual properties and creating a 911 map. We mentioned that an even more advanced technology, known as pictometry, may also be available to the Town, but we have since

discovered that pictometry, which involves high definition aerial photography from oblique angles, is currently not being released by the federal government. Nonetheless, we'll provide the fire department with the orthomaps we have.

TOWN OF ALFORD
Community Development Plan
Economic Development Meeting

February 5, 2004 @ 7:00 PM
Alford Town Hall

Dear Alford Advisory Committee Member,

This letter is to inform you of the upcoming meeting of the Alford Community Development Plan Advisory Committee. The topic to be discussed at this meeting is Economic Development and most of the discussion will be focused on agriculture. Listed below is a tentative agenda for the meeting.

Agenda

Presentation of Alford Economic Data Profile (Bryan Boeskin)

- Review and Discussion of Economic Data
- Review and Discussion of Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Overview of ED Planning Process

Agriculture as a Focus for Local Development (Billie Best)

- Review of Town Farm Survey and aerial maps of local farms
- Presentation of current issues in agriculture
- Discussion of Challenges and Opportunities facing farms in Alford

Other Business and Next Meeting.

Please review the attached materials in preparation for the meeting. If you have any questions regarding this meeting or if you will not be able to attend please contact either Bryan Boeskin at BRPC. The phone number is (413) 442-1521 ext. 15, or you can e-mail bboeskin@berkshireplanning.org.

Attachment:

- Economic Development Profile and Fiscal Impact Analysis

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Town of Alford

Community Development Plan Advisory Committee



TOWN OF ALFORD
CDP HOUSING MEETING
April 1, 2004 @ 7:00 PM
Alford Town Hall

Agenda

- I. Review and Discussion of Housing Profile and Data Analysis
- II. Discussion of Housing Affordability and Potential Issues
- III. Discussion of potential Goals and Recommendations
- IV. Other Business and Next Meeting.

Draft Housing Data Profile

Berkshire Planning Tools – Affordable Housing

Berkshire Planning Tools – Comprehensive Permits (Chapter 40 B)

Alford Community Development Plan Town Survey Results

May – July 2003

Total surveys mailed: approximately 400

Total responses: 155 or 39%

1. Which statement best describes your feelings about Alford?

(1A)	50	I oppose any new development.
(1B)	98	I like things the way they are now but I would not oppose some development.
(1C)	1	I would like to see more housing developments.
(1D)	2	I would like to see new commercial development, as well as more housing developments.

2. What are your concerns about Alford's future?

(2A)	92	Traffic	(2G)	130	Inappropriate development
(2B)	35	Economic development	(2H)	106	Loss of wildlife habitat
(2C)	79	Noise pollution	(2I)	60	Light pollution
(2D)	78	Water quality	(2J)	117	Loss of farmland
(2E)	35	Affordable housing	(2K)	102	Lack of planning
(2F)	9	Other			

3. Do you feel it is important for Alford to have a historic town center located where it is today, with buildings for town administration and space for community gatherings?

(3A) 142 Yes	(3B) 5 No	(3C) 5 Not sure
---------------------	------------------	------------------------

4. Would you like to see Alford invest in developing affordable housing?

(4A) 23 Yes	(4B) 94 No	(4C) 35 Not sure
--------------------	-------------------	-------------------------

5. Are you a registered voter in Alford?

(5A) 133 Yes	(5B) 19 No
---------------------	-------------------

6. Which of these recreational activities do you favor/oppose in Alford?

Off-road vehicles	(6AF)	16	Favor	(6AO)	131	Oppose
Horseback riding	(6BF)	141	Favor	(6BO)	7	Oppose
Cross-country skiing	(6CF)	143	Favor	(6CO)	6	Oppose
Hiking, walking, jogging	(6DF)	150	Favor	(6DO)	0	Oppose
Bicycling	(6EF)	138	Favor	(6EO)	10	Oppose
Bird watching	(6FF)	146	Favor	(6FO)	1	Oppose
Snowmobiling	(6GF)	27	Favor	(6GO)	118	Oppose
Snowshoeing	(6HF)	141	Favor	(6HO)	5	Oppose
Fishing	(6IF)	139	Favor	(6IO)	8	Oppose
Hunting	(6JF)	86	Favor	(6JO)	59	Oppose

7. Do you feel strongly that Alford should preserve its working farms and rural heritage?

(7A) 140 Yes	(7B) 6 No	(7C) 4 Not sure
---------------------	------------------	------------------------

8. Is there a particular parcel of land or property you would like to see preserved in Alford?

(8A)	71	Farms	Name of place	40 named Wilcox, Shepard and/or Dunn farms
(8B)	52	Woodlands	Name of place	6 named Tom Ball Mt
(8C)	39	Wetlands	Name of place	3 named town center wetlands
(8D)	50	Scenic vista	Name of place	15 named the valley and/or West and East Roads
(8E)	40	Buildings	Name of place	33 named town center buildings
(8F)	13	Other		

9. Would you be willing to help fund the preservation initiative you named in Question 8 with a direct contribution, or a donation to a non-profit land trust (for example, the Alford Land Trust)?

(9A) 67 Yes	(9B) 15 No	(9C) 41 Not sure
--------------------	-------------------	-------------------------

10. Would you be willing to raise Alford property taxes to accomplish a preservation initiative that you fully supported?

(10A) 56 Yes	(10B) 35 No	(10C) 59 Maybe
---------------------	--------------------	-----------------------

11. How familiar are you with the array of voluntary methods of land preservation available to you, such as forestry stewardship programs, conservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions, gifts of fee, etc.?
(11A) **16** Very familiar (11B) **77** Somewhat familiar (11C) **56** Not familiar
12. Would you consider permanently restricting development of any of your own land through a conservation restriction or agricultural preservation restriction?
(12A) **44** Yes (12B) **35** Not sure (12C) **13** Never (12D) **55** Not applicable
13. Is there a particular parcel of land or property you would like to see developed in Alford?
Those who answered this question said NO.
14. Would you consider subdividing and developing your own land?
(14A) **8** Yes (14B) **84** No (14C) **17** Not sure (14D) **43** Not applicable
15. Are you a fulltime or part-time resident of Alford?
(15A) **128** Fulltime
- How long have you been a fulltime resident?
(15FTA) **1** Less than 1 year (15FTB) **34** 1-5 Years (15FTC) **21** 6-10 Years
(15FTD) **36** 11-25 Years (15FTE) **34** 26+ Years
- (15B) **23** Part-time (**note many part-timers have become fulltime residents over the years**)
(15PTA) Number of weekends per year **26-50** or (15PTB) number of months per year **6-8**
- How long have you been a part-time resident?
(15PTC) **2** Less than 1 year (15PTD) **4** 1-5 Years (15PTE) **4** 6-10 Years
(15PTF) **2** 11-25 Years (15PTG) **6** 26+ Years
16. How much land do you own?
(16A) **37** Less than 3 acres (16B) **56** 3-10 Acres (16C) **24** 11-20 Acres (16D) **13** 21-35 Acres
(16E) **7** More than 35 acres (16F) **7** More than 100 acres (16G) **0** Not sure (16H) **6** Not applicable
17. Would you favor/oppose the development of new Alford zoning by-laws to:
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------|--------|
| Preserve scenic roadways | (17AF) 136 | Favor | (17AO) 7 | Oppose |
| Preserve historic character | (17BF) 141 | Favor | (17BO) 5 | Oppose |
| Preserve open space | (17CF) 141 | Favor | (17CO) 4 | Oppose |
| Encourage cluster housing* | (17DF) 49 | Favor | (17DO) 85 | Oppose |
| Encourage farming | (17EF) 133 | Favor | (17EO) 10 | Oppose |
| Protect water quality | (17FF) 139 | Favor | (17FO) 6 | Oppose |
- *Cluster housing defined as a development grouping new homes closer together within an envelope of conserved open space to minimize landscape fragmentation and driveway cuts, and maximize contiguous natural habitat.*
18. Do you have a suggestion for a parcel of land that would be appropriate for a new town cemetery? (Favorable terms/tax incentives may apply. Call Joan Polesak at 528-9538)
(18A) **9** Yes Name of place **to be announced**
(18B) **89** No
19. Do you use email at your home in Alford? (19A) **106** Yes (19B) **38** No
If yes, who is your Internet service provider: **Results to be announced.**
Do you have difficulty accessing the Internet from your telephone lines in Alford?
(19C) **45** Yes (19D) **57** No (19E) **5** Not sure
(19F) **6** Use a satellite connection (19G) **6** Not applicable
20. Is there any other issue you believe should be addressed by the town? Please explain.
There were many responses. Look for them in the next few weeks on the town website at townofalford.com.

Appendix B

Five Family Farms Grace the Alford Valley

By Billie Best

413-644-8971 or billie@billibest.com

June 2004 – V2

The Alford Valley is graced by five family farms spanning the length of town from the Green River in the south to the base of Tom Ball Mountain in the north. The southernmost farm is the Dunn Farm which straddles the Massachusetts-New York state line on Green River Road. East of the Dunns, deeper in the valley, three family farms line West Road. The Shepard Farm spans the width of the valley, between East and West Roads, with the farmhouse at the southern end of West Road. The Wilcox Farm spans nearly a mile in the mid-section of West Road, and to the north of them lies Scribner Brook Farm. On the northernmost end of the valley, at the end of East Road and the foot of Tom Ball Mountain, just over the Alford town line in West Stockbridge, is the Springstube Farm. These five farms preserve the Alford community's historic character and agrarian roots, as well as providing serene views, ecological benefits, economic opportunity and food security for the region.

John Dunn's grandfather purchased their family farm on Green River Road (called Seekonk Road in NY) in 1896 when the farm was already nearly a hundred years old. Like all farms back then, it was a mixed-use farm with a variety of animals and enterprises. For many years the Dunns ran a small dairy operation that sold milk to a local creamery in Egremont. The Dunn family stopped producing milk for sale in the days when raw milk was still being delivered to the creamery in cans. For a while after that they had a replacement heifer business. Their farm comprises approximately 180 acres of pasture, hay fields and woodlands, 162 acres of which are in Alford. John Dunn has four adult children. He still works his fields and partners with other farmers to grow, harvest and store hay. Although the Dunn house sits on the New York side of the farm, the Dunn family is part of the Alford community. Their farm presents a picturesque landscape for neighboring Alford homes, a charming streetscape for country drives, an ideal habitat for native wildlife, and an important source of food for local farm animals.

The Shepard family runs a working dairy farm on 170 acres just outside Alford's town center. Gary and Bobbie Shepard have three adult children and have farmed their whole lives. Gary's great-grandparents established the farm in 1901, and Gary's parents still live close by. Today, with their daughter Erin, they manage a large herd of Holsteins, a smaller herd of beef cattle, and a few goats. Bobbie handles dairy operations — milking, calving and artificial insemination. (Only one cow of their herd was born off the farm.) Gary handles growing and harvesting the feed crops for their cattle, and keeping their farm machinery in good repair. The Shepards work an additional 200 acres of crop and pastureland in and around Alford. Erin is diversifying their farm operations to include pastured beef. She is in charge of raising young stock and supports both her parents in managing their workload. Her hope is to take over farm operations when her parents retire. The Shepard Farm includes the most tillable soils in the Alford Valley, which is otherwise stratified by bony ledge and dotted with giant fieldstones. The Shepard family's division of labor and commitment to self-sufficiency make their operation

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particularly efficient, a model of equity management, and (unfortunately) unique in today's debt-driven industrialized farm economy.

The 340-acre Wilcox Farm was established in 1921 by the parents of "Babe" (Raymond, Sr.) Wilcox, when he was five years old. Today he leaves their farm operations to his son, Ray, Jr., also known to longtime residents as "Bucko." Ray, Jr. lives just down the street from his dad. The Wilcox family sold off their dairy herd in 1997 when the price of milk was so low and hiring farmhands so difficult that the family decided to get out of the milk business. Today Ray manages a haying operation and leases his pastures to his neighbors on both sides, the Shepards and Scribner Brook Farm. The future of the Wilcox Farm will play a strategic role in shaping the future of the Alford Valley. The Wilcox property includes scenic wooded uplands on the western slopes of the valley, enormous tracts of open pasture in the center of the valley, three houses, several farm buildings, and much prime road frontage.

Another mile north on West Road, Morven Allen runs Scribner Brook Farm, a grass-based dairy operation. Former owners Frank and Martha Whisenant preserved Scribner Brook Farm in 1982 when they sold their development rights to the state of Massachusetts which placed a permanent Agriculture Preservation Restriction on 170 acres. Morven is an entrepreneurial grass farmer managing a herd of about 250 mostly Jersey dairy cattle and selling milk to regional creameries. He is expanding his operations to include farmland outside Alford, and hopes to build a business in the growing market for locally produced milk products. Grass farming is believed by some to be the future of livestock farming in New England which has the ideal climate and terrain for grazing, a lower-cost, less intensive farming method than grain-feeding.

The Springstube Farm was established in 1897 when John Springstube, Jr.'s great-grandparents returned to New England from the Midwest, in a covered wagon. Today the Springstube Farm comprises 410 acres at the southern end of West Stockbridge. John, Sr., 87, lives on the farm with his wife Eleanor, and still hays the fields. John, Jr., his wife Mershell, and their three young daughters are in the process of transitioning the farm from traditional dairy to a mixture of pastured animals, poultry and other farm products. Their land spans the crossroads between West Stockbridge and Alford, including five houses and several farm buildings. The Springstube daughters are active in 4-H and the family keeps a menagerie of pet and farm animals as each girl has her own interest in rearing critters, showing livestock, and producing everything from fresh eggs to felted wool hats. The Springstube Farm is a historic agrarian landscape that includes a trail leading up Tom Ball Mountain to a breathtaking view of the Berkshires, including Mount Greylock to the north and the Catskills to the west and south.

Each of these five farms contributes to the qualities of the community that keep property values high, making Alford a desirable investment for first and second homeowners who wish to live in a picturesque rural setting. However, those same high property values created by large scenic farms put economic pressure on the community to develop farmland into more high value housing, and push local housing prices too high for fulltime professional farmers or their farm workers. Another complication arises when city and suburban folk move to the country and don't appreciate the sounds and smells of farming, the look of a busy working landscape, the inconvenience of farm vehicles on the

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road, and the earthy nature of people who make their living off the land. These are issues than can be solved by the community coming together to educate itself about rural life and the benefits of local agriculture. There are other larger issues impacting our farms that require broader social change.

Over the past fifty years, in what was ironically called “the Green Revolution,” much of the world’s agriculture has become industrialized, with control of the global food system held by a handful of large multinational corporations. The theory behind the Green Revolution was that food should be grown on land and in climates where it “grows best,” processed in large, efficient, modern factories, and shipped around the world to the population centers that would consume it. The result is that our food now travels an average of 1500 miles to our table. The commoditization of crops has led to increasingly lower prices for farmers. The large-scale mechanization of food production has led to more highly processed foods of poorer nutritional value. Rural economies around the world have been gutted as farmlands have come under centralized corporate ownership and farm resources have been commandeered for profits, not feeding the local people. Today, global trade agreements ensure that large-scale food production around the world is driven by export markets rather than local demand, and the price of food is tied to the global price of oil.

The five farms in the Alford Valley are vulnerable to all of these global market gyrations in addition to the development pressures of a growing local economy. In return for the many benefits the Alford community receives from these five farms, citizens can take proactive steps to support a healthy local agriculture economy. The community can educate itself about the factors that impact farm viability: access to land, access to housing, soil quality, availability of water, affordability of inputs required for production, market access, and market prices paid to farmers for their products. Alford households can make a conscious effort to purchase more locally produced food, direct from the farmer whenever possible.

The Alford community can play an active role in supporting the work of farmer advocacy organizations. Berkshire Grown, Slow Food-Berkshire Chapter, the Regional Farm & Food Project, the New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy, and farmers’ markets in Great Barrington, Sheffield and Lenox are all working to promote local agriculture. The Alford Land Trust and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council are working to protect farmlands with agriculture preservation restrictions and to protect wildlands with conservation restrictions. The Community Land Trust of Southern Berkshires has developed a working model for preserving affordable on-farm housing. The town of Pittsfield is hosting a summer 2004 celebration called “Sheeptacular” to remind us that the Berkshires once had a vibrant regional farm economy that produced world renowned wool for regional textile mills.

Today there is a new agriculture revolution afoot that combines the principals of environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social justice in what is called a community-based food system. This “sustainable agriculture” movement is happening around the world to foster direct connections between citizens and farmers, ensuring farm viability, environmental stewardship and a healthy local food supply. The Alford community can be a model for sustainable agriculture by working collaboratively to

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create a community-based food system that protects the viability of local farms, and enhances the health and wellbeing of community members and their environment.

Appendix C

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF ALFORD

This section examines the socio-economic trends in Alford and in the surrounding area of Berkshire County that affect economic development. Planning to maintain an adequate supply of businesses and employment opportunities while balancing concerns related to open space, natural resources, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and community services is a challenging task. Planning for economic development begins with analysis of detailed information on the local economy in order to identify specific concerns and potential areas in which the town may encourage business and employment. Several factors may indicate the community's economic well-being and capacity for shared and sustainable improvement. Some of these factors are:

- Supply and diversity of local employment opportunities.
- Size, education, and skill level of the Local Labor Force.
- Supply of affordable housing and transportation available for local workers.
- Amount of existing businesses, buildings, infrastructure, or developable land for new businesses.
- Local commercial tax rates, regulations and permitting processes that are conducive to business.
- Economic trends and characteristics of the regional economy.
- Financial, educational, and developmental resources available.

This section presents information and analysis on potential factors that may indicate the Town's economic well-being and capacity for improvement and to determine the community's needs.

Demographics and Population Characteristics

Historical and Projected Population Counts

At a population of 399, Alford is the fourth smallest municipality in Berkshire County. In the past ten years, Alford's year-round population decreased by nineteen persons, 4.5%, while the population of the surrounding area of Berkshire County continued to decrease at an average of approximately 3% every 10 years.

Figure E-1 depicts regional population projections provided to the BRPC by Regional Economic Models, Inc (REMI), of Amherst Massachusetts. The population decline in Berkshire County is expected to end sometime between year 2000 and year 2010. The BRPC expects the population of Alford to follow this trend and increase in the next decades as well. REMI population projections have been a reliable model for regional population trends in the past 20 years, but they are susceptible to unforeseen changes, and have been less reliable forecasting future trends for individual municipalities.

Figure E-1: Historical Population Counts and Future Projections

	Alford	Berkshire County
1970	302	149,402
1980	394	145,110
1990	418	139,352
2000	399	134,953
2010	414*	135,700*
2020	457*	145,875*

Source: U.S Census 2000; *BRPC Population figures: Preliminary, 2002

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Summary of Population Data:

- Fourth smallest town In Berkshire County.
- Previous growth replaced by slight loss of population in last 10 years.
- Population expected to follow regional trend and rebound in the next 10-20 years.

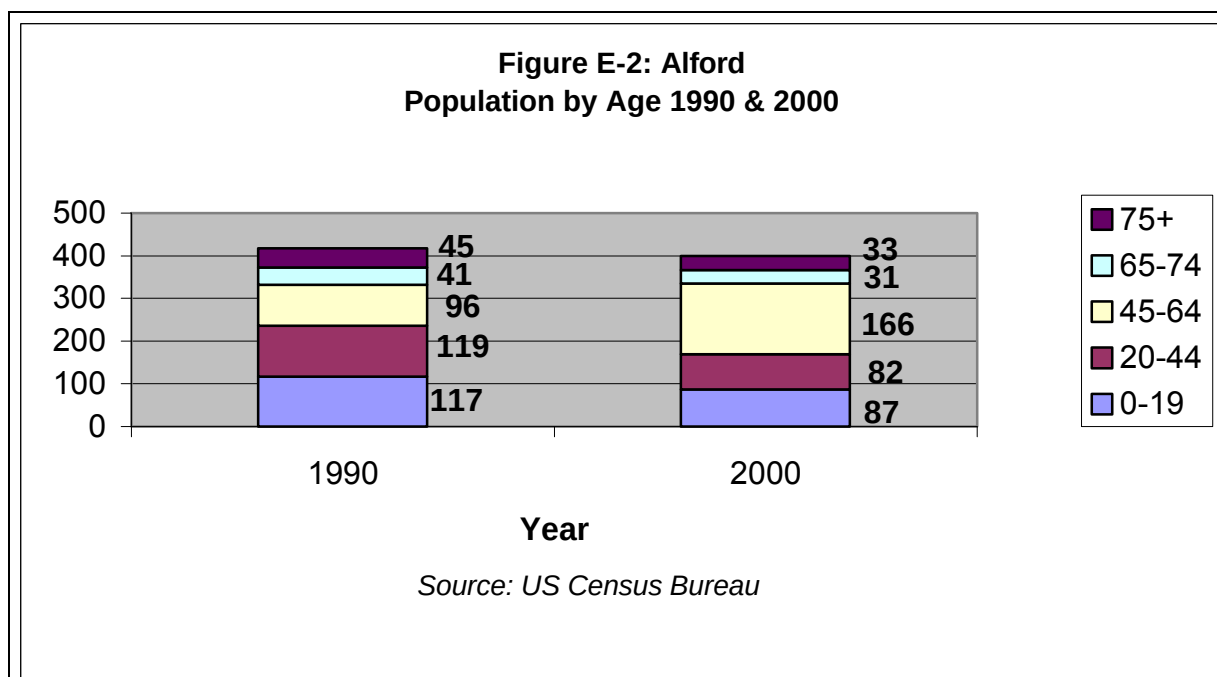
Appendix C

Population By Age

The last ten years have seen significant increases in residents aged 45-64 years, while every other age category experienced a significant population decrease, including children, young adults, and adults over age 65. The median age of Alford residents increased by over six years, from 42.5 to 49.5 – which is significantly older than the countywide median age of 40.5, and shows that approximately half of the Town's population is over age 50. The population of Alford residents is very concentrated in residents aged 45-64, who experienced a 73% increase in population and currently comprise 42% of the town's population (See Figure E-2 below). Other population categories, such as the number of residents aged 65 and older, the population of adults aged 20-44, and the number of residents aged under 20 each decreased by over twenty five percent in the past ten years.

Summary of Population By Age:

- Second highest median age of any town in the Berkshires
- Population highly concentrated in the 45-64 age group - which comprises 42% of the town.
- All other age groups- children, young adults, elderly- are losing population significantly.

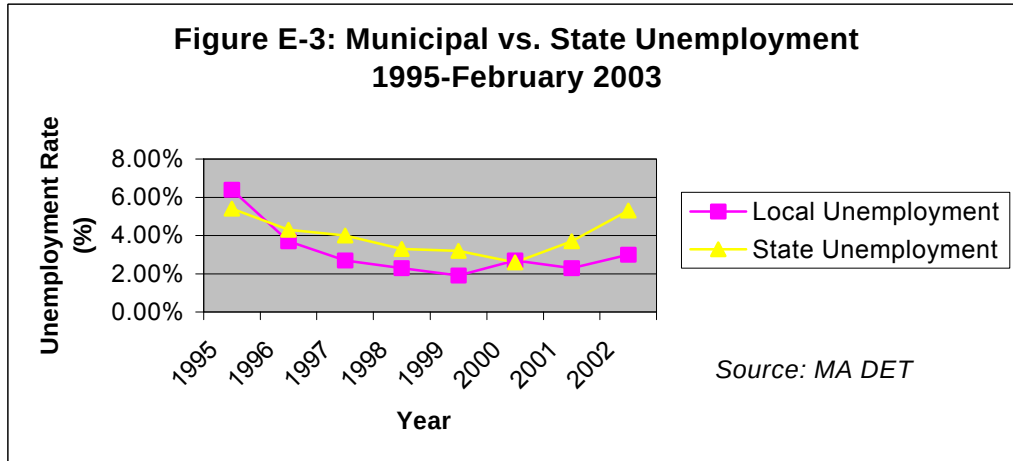


Population By Age 1990 & 2000			
Age	1990	2000	% Change
0-19	117	87	-26%
20-44	119	82	-31%
45-64	96	166	73%
65-74	41	31	-24%
75+	45	33	-27%

Appendix C Labor Force Characteristics

Employment and Unemployment in Alford

Labor force statistics record the number of employed residents who live in town. The town's labor force is not necessarily employed within the town, but they must reside in town. Many may work in neighboring employment centers such as Great Barrington or Pittsfield, or in the Albany, NY or Springfield, MA metropolitan areas. According to the Massachusetts Dept. of Employment and Training, (see figure E-3 below) the Town's Total Labor force as of April 2003 was 232. Unemployment has been on the rise in Alford, and is currently at its highest level in ten years. However, unemployment remains below the State unemployment rate. Town residents experienced a 3.4% unemployment rate in April of 2003, which was lower than the statewide unemployment rate of 5.3%.



Municipal vs. State Unemployment 1995-February 2003				
Year	Local Labor Force	Local Residents Employed	Local Unemployment Rate	State Unemployment Rate
1995	215	212	1.4	5.4%
1996	219	215	1.8	4.3%
1997	227	221	2.6	4.0%
1998	222	217	2.3	3.3%
1999	217	212	2.3	3.2%
2000	212	210	0.9	2.6%
2001	228	224	1.8	3.7%
2002	240	234	2.5	5.3%
Apr 2003	232	224	3.4	5.3%

Source: Massachusetts DET, <http://www.detma.org>

Class of Worker

Alford has a high percentage of self employed residents as opposed to salaried or government workers. Figure E-4 below depicts the percentage of self-employed residents in Alford as compared with Berkshire County and the State.

Figure E-4: Percent of Self Employed Workers - Alford vs. Region 2000

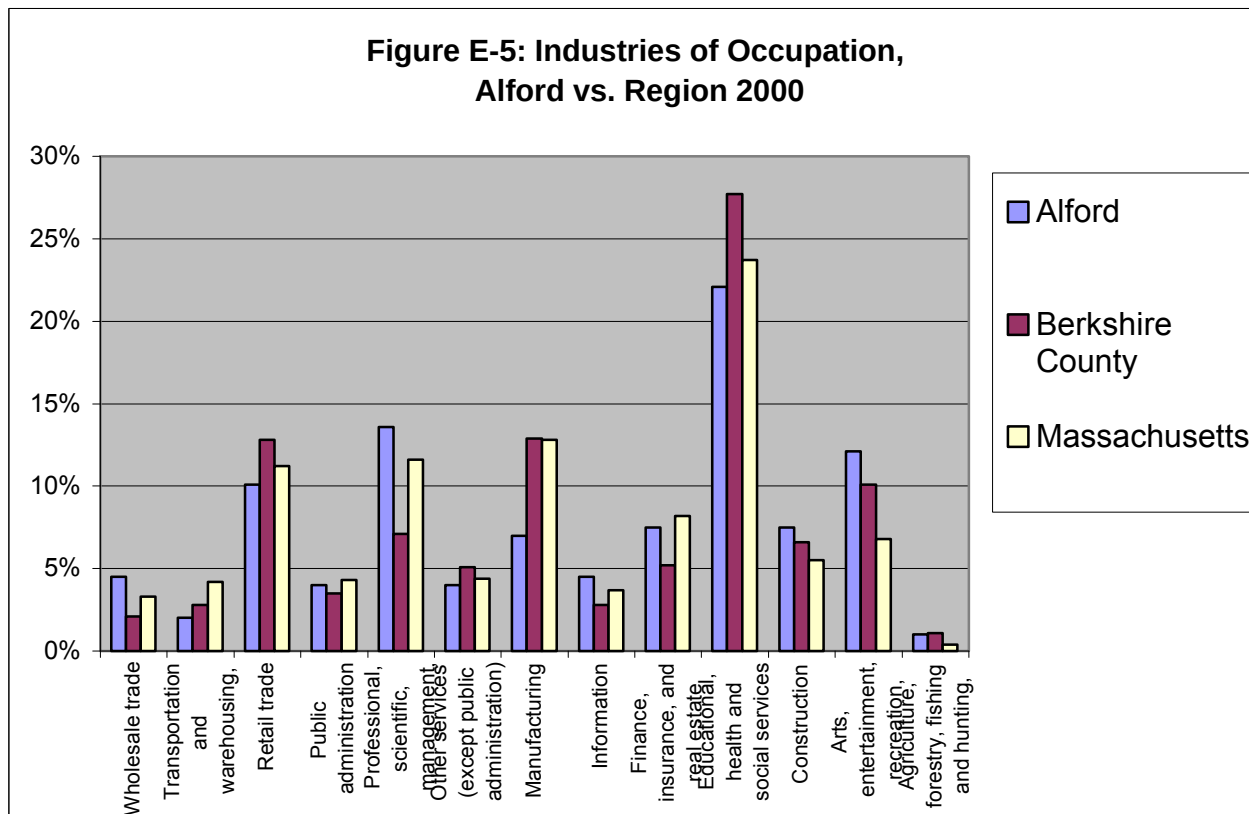
Area	Number of Self-Employed Workers	Percent of workers Self Employed
Alford	42	21%
Berkshire County	5,225	8%
Massachusetts	201,219	6%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Appendix C

Industry of Occupation for Alford Residents

Residents of the Town of Alford are employed in all industry categories detailed in the 2000 U.S. Census. Figure E-5 depicts the Town's relative strengths in relation to the County and the State. The figure shows Alford as having a high percentage of educational, health and social service workers, but that percentage is lower than those of the County and the State. The Town also has fewer residents working in manufacturing and in retail trade than the surrounding region has. However, the Town's second and third most common occupations, professional workers and arts and accommodations workers, are represented at a greater percent in Alford than they are in either the County or the State. The Town differs from the State most dramatically in a particularly strong local representation in arts and accommodations, which employ 12% of all employed town residents, compared to 10% of all workers in Berkshire County and 7% of all state workers.



Industry	Number of Alford Workers	Percent of Alford Workers
Educational, health and social services	44	22%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative	27	14%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations	24	12%
Retail Trade	20	10%
Construction	15	8%
Finance, insurance, real estate	15	8%
Manufacturing	14	7%
Information	9	5%
Wholesale trade	9	5%
Public administration	8	4%
Other services (except public administration)	8	4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4	2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2	1%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

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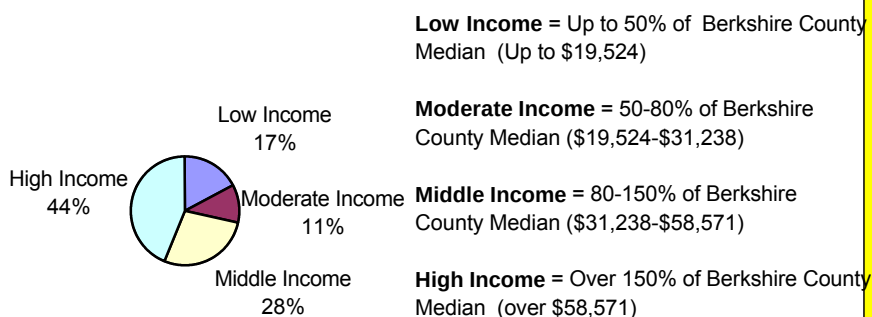
Educational Attainment of Local Workers

Companies in emerging sectors of the economy, especially Technology Enterprises, are highly dependent on the attraction and retention of a well-educated and professional workforce. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 96.7% of the Town's residents aged 25 years or older had at least a high school degree, while 51.5% had at least a bachelor's degree. Alford has an above average educational attainment for the Berkshires, for which 85.1% of this demographic have high school diplomas and 26.0 % have a bachelor's degree.

Local Household Income Levels

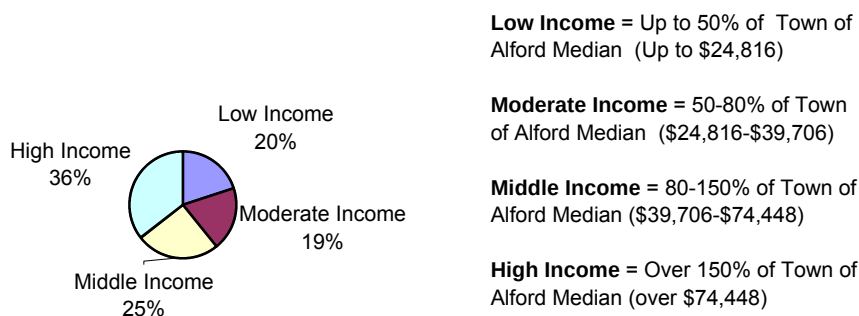
In 2000 the Town's median household income was the 12th highest in Berkshire County. The 2000 median household income in Alford was \$49,632, which was 27% higher than the median County household income of \$39,047. Figure E-6 compares Alford's household incomes relative to the Berkshire County median income level, and figure E-7 shows the local break down of household incomes according to the town median income level. The results show that though the town's median income is higher than the County level, there are still a large number of low-income residents according to county measurements. In fact, the town has a relatively large number of both low income and high-income households. Three of the Town's 109 families were determined to be below the poverty level in 2000 (based on income and family size).

**Figure E-6: Approximate Household Income Levels
According to Berkshire County Median of \$39,047 in 2000.**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

**Figure E-7: Approximate Household Income Levels
According to Town Median of \$49,632 in 2000.**



Appendix C

Summary of Labor Force Characteristics:

- Low Local Unemployment Rate (3.4%), has raised 2.5% since 2000.
- High percentage of residents (21%) self-employed.
- Large Number of Social Services, Professional, Arts, and Accommodations workers, with local concentration in arts and accommodations workers.
- Only 2 current agricultural workers.
- Highly educated workforce, 51.5% with at least a bachelor's degree.
- A significant number of both high- and low-income households.

Local Businesses and Economic Characteristics

Local Business Inventory and Growth Trends

The Town of Alford is a small rural community with a limited economy. There are no retail stores, hotels, motels or gas stations, and the main street consists of a church, a town hall, and a one-room schoolhouse.

The local business inventory describes the jobs that are located in the Town of Alford. Much of the data is kept confidential (conf) by the Massachusetts DET because of the low number of workers in those fields. Total payrolls from local businesses peaked around 1995 and by 2000 fell to approximately one third of their 1995 level. The 2001 average annual wage of \$21,535 for jobs in Alford was over 30% less than the 2001 average annual wage for Berkshire County, which was approximately \$31,000.

Figure E-8: Employment and Wages in Alford										
Year	Total Annual Payroll	Avg Annual Wage	Establishments	Total	Agriculture Forestry Fishing	Government	Construction	Manufacturing	Trade	Services
1985	\$97,200	\$8,833	5	11	conf	2	conf	0	0	conf
1990	\$777,294	\$25,074	8	31	conf	conf	conf	0	conf	conf
1995	\$1,698,719	\$35,740	15	49	conf	conf	conf	0	17	13
2000	\$560,355	\$20,013	7	28	conf	0	conf	0	conf	conf
2001	\$646,046	\$21,535	9	30	conf	conf	10	0	0	conf

Source: MA Department of Employment and Training, 2003

Current Local Wages and Employment by Industry

According to the data from the final quarter of 2002, there are nine businesses in Alford, which employ a total of thirty people. Half of these jobs in Alford are in the construction industry, which has a lower average wage than the average of the all industries combined. Figure E-9 shows that the final quarter 2002 average weekly wage of all industry jobs, including construction, is \$655 a week, or approximately \$34,150 a year. The average weekly wage of the construction jobs alone is \$560, approximately \$29,200 a year. The separate average weekly wage for each of the other industries found in Alford was not available.

Figure E-9: Industry Employment and Wages in Alford, Fourth Quarter 2002				
Description	No. of Establishments	Total Wages*	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Total, All Industries	9	\$258,379	30	\$655
Construction	3	\$111,673	15	\$560

Source: MA Dept of Employment and Training, 2003

*Note-Figure E-9 depicts data for one quarter, not annual data as in Figure E-8.

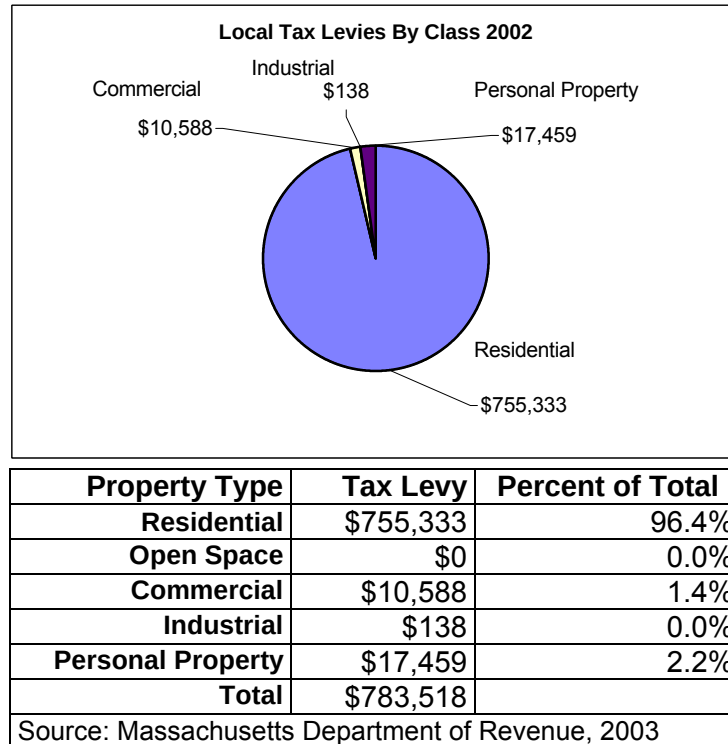
Appendix C

Local Fiscal Characteristics

Summary of Local Revenues

Tax levies from commercial and industrial properties often offset the fiscal burden placed upon residential property owners. However, Alford's tax base is overwhelmingly residential. Only one percent (1%) of the town's tax levy in 2002 was gained from both commercial and industrial property combined. The vast majority of residential taxes are derived from single-family housing. With a 2002 tax rate of 6.55, the Town of Alford town has a tax rate nearly half of the 2002 Berkshire County average tax rate of 12.51.

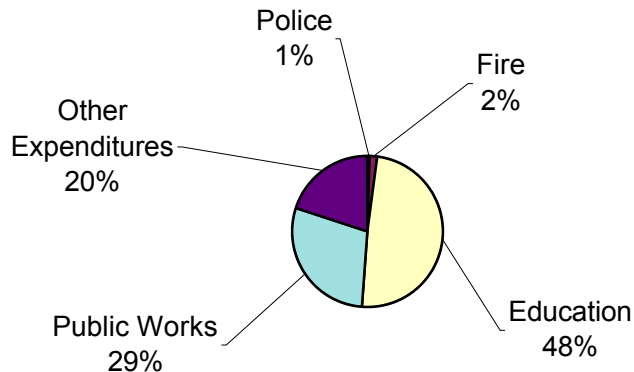
Figure E-10: Alford Tax Levies for Fiscal Year 2002



Summary of Local Expenses

The total town budget for general operating costs in 2000 was \$851,624. The two largest expenses for the Town are Education (48% of total) and Public Works, which includes highways (29% of total). Figure E-11 below depicts the town expenses as a percent of the total.

Figure E-11: Alford Local Expenses By Function 2000



2000 Alford General Fund Expenditures		
Police	\$5,320	1%
Fire	\$14,467	2%
Education	\$414,899	48%
Public Works	\$246,096	29%
All Other (Government, etc.)	\$170,842	20%
Total	\$851,624	

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, 2003

Summary of Local Businesses and Fiscal Characteristics:

- 9 businesses employing total of 30 persons, decreased from a high of 15 businesses and 49 jobs in town in the mid 1990's.
- Half of town jobs (15) in construction, the largest industry
- 2001 annual wage for local jobs was \$21,000, significantly lower than \$31,000 Berkshire average
- Only 1.4% of local tax revenue is commercial, 96.4% is residential.
- Education is 48% of town budget, lower than County average of 54% of Towns' budgets.
- Public works is also a high percentage of (29%) of Town budget.

Regional Business and Economic Characteristics

Regional Business Overview

According to a 2001 analysis of employment in the Berkshires by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board "Blueprint", 9 industry segments (Figure E-12) are defined as "critical" to the region since these 9 provide the preponderance of employment opportunities, or about 78% of the jobs – in the region.

Figure E-12 – Critical Industries in Berkshire County

Industry	(% Workforce)
Health & Human Services	16%
Travel & Tourism	14%
Retail	14%
Education	11%
Paper/Plastics	9%
Construction	5%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4%
Business Services	3%
Applied Technology	2%
Total:	78%

Source: Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2001

Current Regional Growth Trends & Emerging Industries

The 2001 Regional Employment Board Workforce Development Blueprint has identified business services atop 5 other industry sectors with growth rates in employment in excess of 10%, represent the region's "emerging" industries (Figure E-13).

Figure E-13: Emerging Industries in Berkshire County

Industry:	Growth Rate (%):	% of Workforce Employed:
Business Services	25	2.8%
Misc. Retailing	18	4.5%
Spec. Trades Contractors	18	2.6%
Gen'l. Building Contractors	18	1.0%
Amusement & Recreation	15	2.3%
Personal Services	12	1.2%

Source: Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, 2001

Another recently recognized growth area in Berkshire County is in the Technology Enterprise sector, which is comprised of four major types of activities: Software and Systems Design; Design and Art; Content and Publishing; and Information Technology (IT) Business Consulting. The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute recently completed the first major study of the growth of technology enterprise sector in Berkshire County. The study, *Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, Feb 2002*, reports that since 1993, the Technology Enterprise sector has grown at a higher rate than every major division of the Berkshire economy in terms of firm growth, employment growth, and real annual payroll growth. The study shows that payroll for Technology Enterprise firms increased by 190% from 1993-2002, while total payroll in the region increased by only 13.5%.

Future Growth Areas Regionally

Economic forecasts provided by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission using the REMI model indicate that while the service sector will continue its upward trajectory in numbers of employees, high technology and high productivity manufacturing will continue to be the structural and economic base of the region's economy.

Future Growth Areas Regionally (continued)

Berkshire County's future base is very much tied to its strong past manufacturing base industries – though with substantially fewer employees, but unprecedented output value as measured by Gross Regional Product.

Job growth within the major sectors of the regional economy is slated to continue and remain roughly the same proportionally out to 2025. Services are expected to continue to climb in employment to almost 50% of total employment by 2025, with healthcare services being the leading employer regionally within this sector. Increasing numbers of service jobs can be expected to affect overall wages and income in this region.

Technology Enterprise is also expected to continue to increase its substantial impact on Berkshire County's economy. According to a survey by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, companies associated with this sector reported a positive business outlook, with 75% expecting increased revenues over the next three years and 96% reporting they are likely to remain in Berkshire County for the next 5 years.

Local and Regional Employment Outlook

Concerns have been raised both by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training's publication on regional workforce trends that much of the job growth taking place in the Berkshires is in low wage segments of the service and retail sectors. At the same time, businesses throughout the region have experienced a difficulty in recruiting qualified employees with job skills and technical abilities matching employer needs.

The number of higher paying small, or "micro" businesses has been growing in the area. The role of small or "micro" businesses is of interest in Town and in the surrounding region for its importance in economic development – especially because of changes in where and how people work. Advances in telecommunications technology and the growth of personal computers in the home have meant many more people can – and do – work at home as self-employed contractors and consultants. Results of the Donahue Institute study on Technology Enterprise found that Berkshire County was home to 1,500 Technology Enterprise sole proprietorships, as well as 154 employer firms with an average of eight employees. This contrasts with the 39 per firm average in manufacturing businesses, and the 15 per firm in the average services industry business in Berkshire County.

Self-employment has been increasing at a faster rate than wage and salary employment both regionally and on a national level. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis for 1998 for the Berkshire region indicate that proprietorships (both farm and non-farm) represent about 18% of total regional employment, and have increased in number about 2.8% from 1994.

Factors Influencing Future Economic Development in Alford

Rural Landscapes, Natural Resources and the Seasonal Economy

The economy of the Southern Berkshires, which includes Alford, is driven by seasonal visitors, seasonal residents, and retirees, who come to enjoy the open spaces, natural and cultural resources, and overall rural character of the area. For this reason, economic development in town is closely linked to the continued attractiveness of the town's rural working landscapes and natural features. For this reason, the continued viability of farms and agriculture, which has attracted seasonal residents and defined the character of the Town, is important to maintaining the character and fiscal stability of the town.

Economic Development and Financial Resources in the Berkshires

Berkshire County municipalities have access to a number of regional and sub-regional economic development organizations, which may provide information and assistance on community development initiatives or economic development funds for projects. Such examples include the Lee CDC, Southern Berkshire CDC, and the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation – which serves municipalities and businesses throughout Berkshire County.

Infrastructure, Service Demands & Available Utilities

The town does not have a municipal water and sewer system. According to the BRPC 2001 Data Book, public water or sewer serves none of the Town's housing units. Massachusetts Electric provides electricity service for the Town, but no gas service is provided. Trash disposal is done at the Town Transfer station, and trash pick-up service is available from private companies for a fee.

Workforce Availability

Companies in emerging sectors of the economy, especially Technology Enterprises, are highly dependent on the attraction and retention of a well-educated and professional workforce. A variety of creative and intellectual skills are in demand along with specific technical expertise, which may be achieved through local educational opportunities and workforce development programs:

Local Educational Opportunities

Residents in Town have access to higher education (Associate's Level) and technical training programs at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams also offers undergraduate and graduate level programs accessible to both day and evening students. Two other residential private colleges serve the region: Williams College and Simon's Rock. Simon's Rock offers high school age students the opportunity to enroll in college programs. The University of Massachusetts also offers a MBA program in Pittsfield. Additional opportunities for technical training or skill-building are viewed as critical to workforce development in the region.

Workforce Development Programs

Residents in Town have access to a number of workforce development programs and economic development organizations offering workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth employment and training opportunities, strategic planning resources, and much more. The attached appendix lists these economic development programs and organizations with a description of the activities and resources in which they are involved.

Housing Availability for a Future Work Force

If Alford's population and economy is to continue to grow at projected levels, new development will be need to incorporate housing affordable to those earning local wages. Housing information provided by local realtors and the 2000 census show evidence that the new housing is not being developed for a diverse future local workforce, rather it is primarily high-end seasonal residences.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Listed below are key organizations – both public and private – which assist in regional economic issues surrounding workforce development.

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB)

The BCREB is the local organization responsible for assisting employers with workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth opportunities, and strategic planning & oversight. It helps access the following programs: Career Center, Workforce Training Fund, Department of Employment and Training, Berkshire Training and Employment Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Advantage Employee Network and Full Employment Program. It also promotes the School-to-Work Initiative, Summer of Work and Learning and Welfare-to-Work Initiative.

Berkshire Enterprises

Berkshire Enterprises runs ten-week training programs addressing a wide range of issues that serve as the foundation for new entrepreneurs. The focus is on business plan development, financing, marketing and management.

Berkshire Council for Growth

Leading the coalition-building effort has been the Council for Growth, established in 1998 as a regional outgrowth of the Cellucci Administration's Berkshire Jobs Task Force. The Council and its committees, in partnership with volunteers from many private businesses and support from the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, have coordinated/spearheaded a number of important regional initiatives including a regional jobs website, www.berkshirejobs.com.

Berkshire Applied Technology Council

Formed in 1997/1998 as a partnership of businesses and government, local schools, Berkshire Community College, and regional 4 year colleges, the Council's mission is to establish the Berkshire region as a technology center of excellence. The Council provides state of the art educational programs, financial assistance, training, and professional support targeting students and incumbent workers, the Berkshire Applied Technology Council addresses a key factor in attracting and retaining technology-based industries and firms – the need for technically trained employees. Berkshire Applied Technology Council has sponsored the following:

TECHPATH: This workforce/educational program links high school to associate to baccalaureate degrees with a high technology curriculum specifically integrating local industry applications. The TECHPATH program is designed to be accessible to incumbent workers, as well as a seamless link in motivating and developing future high tech workers. Over 50 students are currently enrolled in the program.

WOMEN IN TECH PATH PROGRAM: A collaboration with Berkshire Community College, this project will offer after-school training to 22 young women (from the 11 regional public schools) in engineering, graphics/animation, and information technology. A follow-up summer program – the Internet Academy – will also provide job shadowing and electronic networking components.

Berkshire Connect

A regional initiative to improve telecommunications access in rural or under-served areas with a cost-effective solution to help drive regional economic activity. The partnership has resulted in building sufficient telecommunications infrastructure and services to support the needs of businesses and industry in this region at a competitive and affordable price.

State Funded Economic Development Grants Available to Berkshire Communities

The following is a brief summary of several economic development funding and assistance programs provided by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Agriculture. For additional information on these funding sources and how they may be utilized by the Town, contact Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, or visit the Massachusetts State website: www.mass.gov.

Massachusetts Dept of Agriculture Farm Viability Program

This is a voluntary program supplying funding and technical assistance to farmers seeking to increase the economic stability and viability of their farms or agricultural enterprises.

Community Development Fund (CDF)

Communities are eligible for this grant depending on a scale that determines the level of needs based upon an assessment formula. These would be considered communities of moderate needs.

Housing Development Support Program

This grant is limited to communities building smaller housing developments. It provides partial support to such projects.

Ready Resource Fund

Communities that are creating small to medium size economic development projects are eligible for this grant.

Massachusetts Community Capital Fund

Depending on eligibility, this can provide grants to communities for assisting businesses. Industrial, commercial and real estate, including mixed -use development projects may be eligible.

Mini Entitlement Program

This is a program designed for the communities with the highest needs as designated by the DHCD.

Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program

A loan guarantee of HUD loan for communities to use to assist businesses. Industrial, commercial and real estate, including mixed use developments may be eligible.

Data References

Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, February 2002.

Workforce Development Blueprint, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc., July 2002.

America's Labor Market Information System Employer Database, 2nd edition. InfoUSAGov., 2001.

Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training. <http://www.detma.org>

Data Book, 2001, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Appendix D

I. INTRODUCTION

This section examines the socio-economic trends in Alford and in the surrounding area of Berkshire County, which affect housing supply and demand.

II. Housing Profile - Supply

A. Current Housing Stock Statistics

Current Housing Stock

Single Family Homes	324
Mobile Homes	1
Multi-Family Units	4
Condominiums	0

Total Housing Stock: 329

Source: Town of Alford Assessor's Office, 4/2004

Housing Tenure

Table H-2: Housing Occupancy in Alford, 1990, 2000					
	Number 1990	% Total 1990	Number 2000	% Total 2000	% Change, 1990-2000
Occupied: Owner	146	53%	158	57%	5.4%
Occupied: Rental	17	6%	13	5%	2.4%
Occupied: Seasonal	86	31%	106	38%	23.2%
Un-occupied: Non-Seasonal	28	10%	2	.01%	92.8%
Total Housing Stock:	277		279		.7%

Source: US Census 2000 Total Count

Summary:

- *Increase in seasonal units – possibly conversion to year round, demolition, abandonment*
- *Significant decrease in un-occupied non-seasonal units*
- *Overall number of occupied units increased, possible conversion of rental to owner occupation and non-season units to full time occupied units*
- *50 new homes since census was taken*

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Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory

Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

According to the Massachusetts DHCD Inventory of CH40B Subsidized Housing Inventory through April 2002, none of Alford's 173 year-round Housing Units qualify as Chapter 40B Units. "Chapter 40B Units" are units considered affordable by low- and moderate-income households with long-term restrictions that ensure that it will continue to be affordable. Chapter 40B authorizes a housing agency or developer to obtain a single comprehensive permit for the construction of subsidized low- or moderate-income housing. If a community in which less than 10% of its total year-round housing stock is subsidized low- or moderate-income housing, denies a comprehensive permit, or imposes conditions that make the project un-economic, the developer may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee for review of the local action.

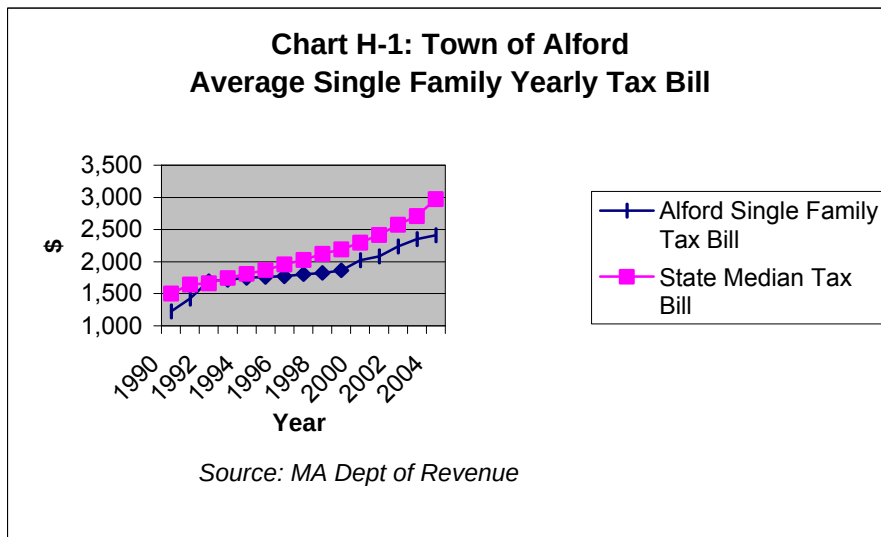
Summary:

- *No qualified 40B units in Alford – exposes Town to Comprehensive Permit applications*

Property Values

There are 324 taxable single-family parcels in Alford in 2004. The average assessed value of single-family home for FY2004 was \$362,514. The tax rate for all residential property in Alford in FY2004 was \$6.65, which was a little over half of the average rate of \$12.67 for Berkshire County Towns. The average single-family tax bill in FY2004 was \$2,411, ranking the town at 226 of 297 Massachusetts towns reporting tax rates to date.

Source: Mass DOR



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Assessed Value vs. Market Value

Sources:

Sales Data: <http://rers.thewarrengroup.com/townstats/search.asp>

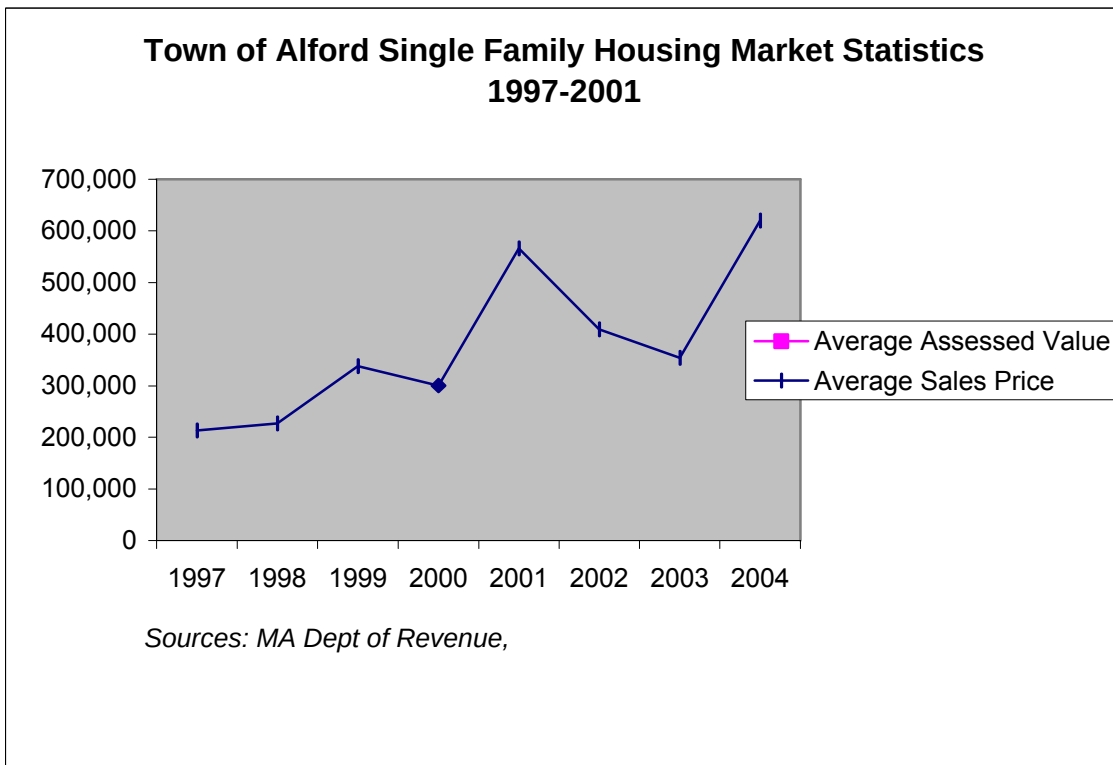
Assessed Property Values Data: [MA DOR 1988-2001 AVG Single Family Tax Bill](#)

Table H-3: Annual Single Family Home Statistics 1997-2001

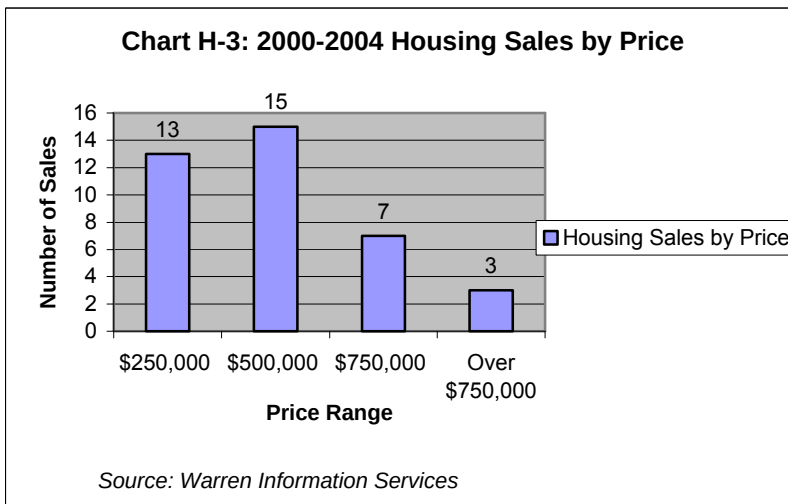
Year	Average Assessed Value	Average Sales Price	Median Sales Price	Total Number of Sales
1997		\$212,882	\$235,000	14
1998		\$226,541	\$135,000	12
1999		\$338,000	\$330,000	14
2000		\$300,458	\$340,000	12
2001		\$565,944	\$340,000	9
2002		\$409,480	\$375,000	10
2003		\$354,166	\$370,250	6
2004		\$620,000	\$620,000	1
			TOTAL:	78

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Chart H-2: Single Family Home Statistics 1997-2001



Recent Single Family Home Sales by Price



Summary:

- Significant variations in average sales price while median sales price are more steadily in the \$250,000 - \$500,000 range as reflected in Chart H-3.

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Local Educational Expenditures

Each year, the Department of Education (DOE) reports community educational expenditures. The Net Average Membership Pupils is the number of students residing in Alford, averaged over the entire year. The number includes pupils from Alford enrolled in local and regional schools, and those being tuitioned to out-of-town schools. The number does not include non-residents. Cost per pupil is based on the DOE integrated operating costs. The DOE integrated operating cost is one of the most widely accepted measures for comparing educational spending among communities. It reflects the community's share of regional school spending as well as that of its own local schools. The figure does not include capital outlay and construction costs. The following chart shows the total number of membership pupils, and calculated operational costs per pupil for Alford from 1995-2000. It also includes school expenditures as a percentage of all town expenditures from the general fund on government operational costs excluding capital outlay and construction costs.

Table H-4: Educational Expenditures 1995-2001				
Year	Net Avg. Membership Pupils	Education spending as % of all Town expenditures	Cost Per Pupil	School Cost Per Capita
1995	53	54%	\$6,389	\$753
1996	45	50%	\$6,525	\$810
1997	39	58%	\$6,780	\$800
1998	47	44%	\$6,314	\$854
1999	39	47%	\$6,780	\$903
2000	51	49%	\$7,607	\$1,041
2001	39	40%	\$9,486	\$795

Source: Massachusetts Dept of Revenue

In 2001, the cost per pupil was \$9,486, which was greater than the Berkshire County average of \$7,831. In 2001, 40% of town expenditures were for educational purposes, which was lower than the countywide average of 54% educational spending. The DOR lists the Town's 2001 per-capita spending on education to be \$795.

Summary:

- *Steady and significant rise in cost per pupil.*
- *Reduction in net average member pupils appears to be reducing amount of Town expenditures going toward education.*

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Construction Trends & New Construction 1995-2001

Sources: [State Data Center Annual New Construction Reports](#)

Town Building Inspector Data to fill in recent data

Table H-5: New Construction Values 95-01

Year	Total Single-Family Units Built ⁽¹⁾	Avg New Home Value ⁽¹⁾	Avg Existing Home Value ⁽²⁾
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000*			
2001*			

Sources: ⁽¹⁾ *Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research*

⁽²⁾ *Massachusetts Department of Revenue*

**Data from Town Building Inspector*

Note: Home Value is based on pre-market assessment by Assessor

Renovations

Source: *Town Building Inspector List of Permits for 1999 - March 2002*

(Included in appendix)

Development Patterns

The Town of Alford is a rural residential community located in southwest Berkshire County. Its landscape of forested hillsides and rolling pastureland is as picturesque as any place in New England. The small village center has a church, town hall, and a one-room schoolhouse with no retail establishments. Alford has a unique rural charm that makes it a very desirable place for full time as well as seasonal residents.

Approximately 1000 acres or 14% of the total area of the town is permanently protected open space*. There is no state owned land located in Alford Large expanses of unprotected pastureland in the valley may be prime areas for large-scale residential development. The continuing trend in south Berkshire County towards the construction of large expensive "trophy homes" along rural roads and on forested hillsides would dramatically alter the unique rural character of the community.

Most of the residential development in the town has been single-family houses on large lots along existing roadways.

Source: *BRPC 2000 Buildout Analysis / this info was added by BRPC for this report*

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Utilities

Alford has no municipal water and sewer systems, as all housing units must provide on-site disposal. Western Massachusetts Electric Company and Massachusetts Electric provide electricity service for the Town. The town does not have gas service. Trash disposal is done at a transfer station.

Source: BRPC Data Book 2001

Local Zoning Provisions

The entire Town of Alford consists of a single Residential Agricultural zoning district. Single family dwellings are permitted by-right and two-family dwellings are permitted with approval from the Planning Board. Mobile Homes are not allowed. The minimum lot size is two acres. Retail stores and consumer service establishments are not allowed by-right. Other types of commercial development require a special permit from the Planning Board. Accessory use apartments are allowed by right.

Alford does not have its own regulations for Wetlands, or Upland/Slope Protection. Regulations do exist for Floodplains, Streams & Ponds, Earth Removal, and Local Historic District.

Source: BRPC 2000 Buildout Analysis

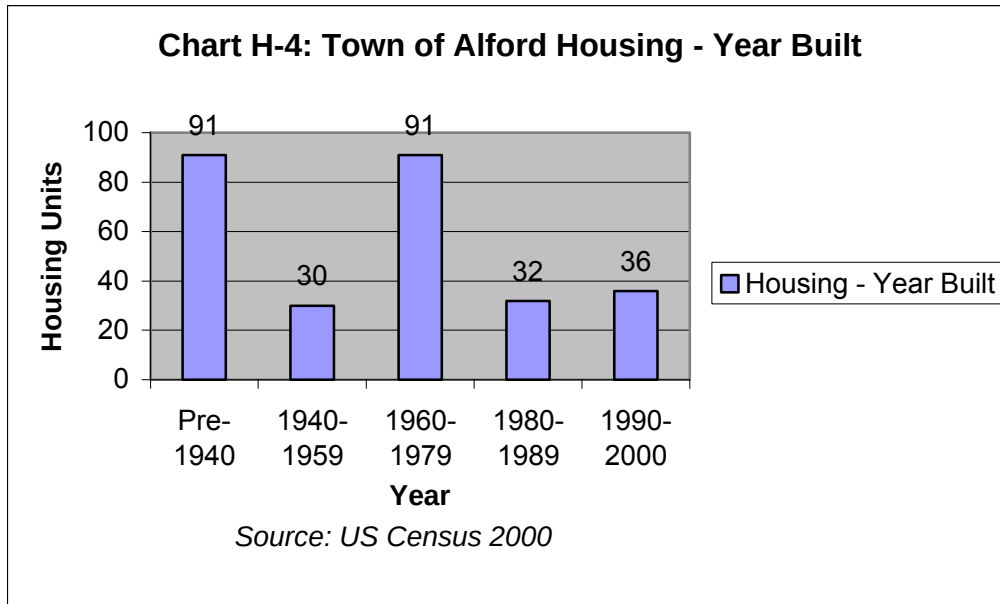
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C. Current Housing Conditions

Age of Housing Stock

Twenty Five percent (25%), or 66 of Alford's 279 housing units were built since 1980. In 1990, Alford had 163 households and 277 total housing units. In 2000, Alford had 171 households and 279 housing units.

Chart H-4: Housing Unit Construction – Year Built



Assessment of the Housing Stock

Response to previous findings

Structural Conditions

Source: Town Building Inspector,

III. Housing Profile – Demand

A. Population Statistics

Historical Population Counts

Source: BRPC 2001 Data Book Census Figures

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Table H-6: Historical Population Counts

	Alford	Berkshire County
1970	302	149,402
1980	394	145,110
1990	418	139,352
2000	399	134,953
2010	414*	135,700*

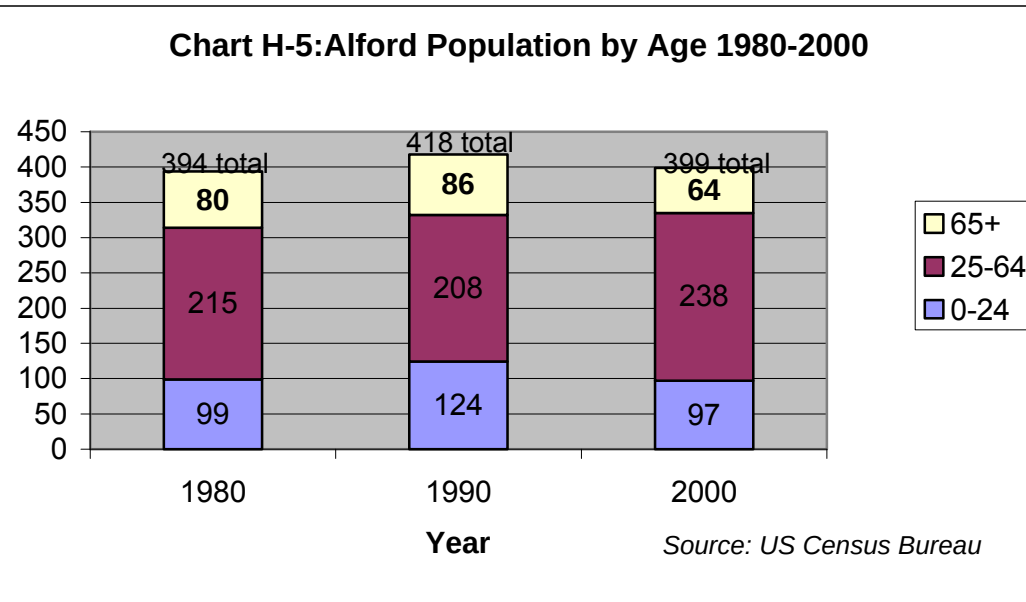
*projected. Source: BRPC Population Projections-Preliminary, Nov. 2002

Population By Age

Source: BRPC 2001Data Book Census Figures

Population By Age 1980-2000				
Age	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-2000
0-24	99	124	97	-2%
25-64	215	208	238	11%
65+	80	86	64	-20%
TOTAL	394	418	399	1.2%

Chart H-5:Alford Population by Age 1980-2000



B. Economic Statistics:

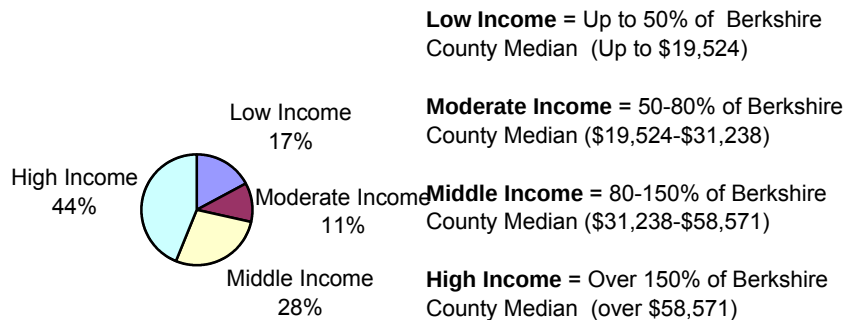
Local Household Income Levels

The Median Household income for Alford was \$49,632 in 2000 and was higher than the Berkshire County Median of \$39,047, but lower than the Massachusetts median household income of \$50,502. Chart H-6 shows the approximate distribution of Household Income levels in Alford according to countywide low, moderate, middle, and high household income levels. The chart shows that 28% of Alford households are

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considered low or moderate income households, earning up to 80% of the median household income for the county.

Figure H-6: Approximate Household Income Levels
According to Berkshire County Median of \$39,047 in 2000.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Local Employment

The average annual wage for persons employed in jobs located in Alford was \$21,535. This suggests that it may be difficult for those working in Alford to live in Town.

C. Market Trends for Housing

In recent interviews with the Berkshire Eagle, (*Housing Demand Up, Supply Down* June 11, 2002), real estate agents have seen an increase in demand and a reduction of supply throughout Berkshire County. The Berkshire County Board of Realtors, in their most recent Berkshire County Market Trend Assessment, reports that from 2000 to 2001 the Berkshire's experienced a (4%) decrease in units sold, but an 11% jump in average selling price. In the short term, there appear a combination of factors increasing real estate investment, such as a low interest rate and a lack of confidence in investing in the stock market. Longer-term factors influencing the Alford real estate market is an apparent northward encroachment of high demand and higher real estate prices for higher-end homes, most notably high-end second homes, currently being experienced in South County. Realtors in the Central and Northern Berkshires commented on a "greater awareness of the [real estate] opportunities somewhat north of South County".

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IV. Affordability Gap Analysis

Housing Affordability Methodology

The housing affordability study was conducted to determine whether or not the “typical” family in Alford could actually afford to buy a home in Alford at current market values. According to HUD guidelines housing is considered to be affordable when monthly mortgage payments comprise no more than twenty-eight percent (28%) of a household’s total monthly income.

This analysis factors in consideration determining the availability of affordable housing for all town residents. The typical family was defined as a household with an income equal to the median estimated income of the Alford (\$49,632). A typical low income family was defined as a household with an income equal to or less than 50% of the Town’s median estimated income (\$24, 816), and a moderate income family earned 80% of the median income (\$39,705). Higher income households earned over 150% of the Town’s median income (over \$74,448).

Alford’s median housing price was taken from sales data provided by Warren Information Services, while Alford’s median income for 2000 was given by the 2000 US Census.

Maximum price affordability levels for each type of household were determined by mortgage loan qualification calculations provided by local mortgage lenders. The analysis was based on a 10% down payment with no points. Calculations incorporate a mortgage interest rate of 7.0%, compiled as an average of current rates offered by local lending institutions at the time of the report. A current localized basic homeowner’s insurance quote for Alford was provided by local insurance brokers. The results estimate a maximum housing price with monthly payments that are no more than 28% of the household income with an assumed maximum of 8% in other debts or obligations forming a combined personal debt payments of no more than 36% of monthly income.

Chart H-8: 2001 Affordability Matrix (Based on 184 total Households)

Income Level	2000 Household Income Limits	Calculated Maximum Affordable Home Price	Number of Sales below Maximum Price 1999-2003	Number of Alford Households in this range in 2000	Percent of Alford Households in this range 2000	% Sales (1999-2003) affordable by these households	Affordability Gap
Low income – up to 50% of Median	\$19,524	\$91,542	3	36	20%	6%	14%
Moderate – income up to 80% of Median	\$39,705	\$140,803	11	56	31%	22%	9%
Middle Income- up to 150% of Median	\$74,448	\$255,930	20	24	13%	39%	None (-26)
High Income- over 150% of median	over \$74,448	over \$255,930	51	63	36%	100%	NONE (64%)
Total			51	179	100%		
Median Household Income 2000	\$49,632	\$173,7360	13	92	51%	25%	NONE (-42%)

Appendix D

Affordability Findings

The Gap Analysis shows that homes being sold in Alford not affordable to all residents in the town. There is an affordability gap found for low and moderate income households (14% and 9% respectively). Twenty-two percent (22%), of the sales from 1999-2003 were sold at a price that was not affordable to 51% of the people who bought homes during this time.

It should be noted that this is a price-based analysis only, and does not document that low-income households own, or are buying the lower priced houses. The analysis also does not say anything about the quality of the homes or the amount of renovations needed to get them up to health and building code regulations. Comments on the conditions of housing are given above in the *Assessment of Housing Stock*. This analysis also does not account for homes owned by absentee owners and landlords.

Rental Housing Affordability

The number of rental units in Alford has decreased from 1990 to 2000 by 24%, from 17 to 13. Of the 13 rental units in Alford, the median monthly rent in 2000 was \$346. This is well below the county median of \$499, and would be considered affordable to a low income household in Alford-comprising less than 30% of monthly income for a household earning 50% of the Alford median household income.

IV. Current Housing Activities

E.O. 418 Certification

The Town of Alford has not received Executive Order 418 Housing Certification for FY2002 under Category A which requires that the Town show that new affordable units have been produced in the Town and that the Town has a community housing strategy. This Certification allows the Town to be much more competitive when applying for grant funds from a number of State agencies including the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. There are currently \$401 million dollars worth of grants and loans that are subject to EO 418 certification. The Town is in the process of certifying for FY2004.

Appendix D

Appendix A: Affordable Homeownership and Rehabilitation Assistance Programs

Good Samaritan Homeownership Program

Berkshire County Towns participate with Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, Berkshire Fund, Inc., and nine local lenders with the Good Samaritan Homeownership program described below. The participating lenders include Berkshire Bank, Legacy Banks, Pittsfield Cooperative Bank, Lee Bank, Lenox Savings Bank, Adams Co-operative Bank, So. Adams Savings Bank, Hoosic Bank and Greylock Federal Credit Union.

The Good Samaritan Homeownership program, received a Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program Grant for \$96,000 in 1999 to assist low-income households with down payment and closing cost assistance. This program is available to income eligible residents throughout the County and more than 175 families have bought homes through the program in the past 10 years. Participating lenders provide a first mortgage equal to 80% of the purchase price, Berkshire Fund provides a second mortgage equal to 15% of the purchase price, and the buyers provide a 5% down payment. The banks also purchased more than \$1.6 million of low interest bonds to fund the down payment pool.

USDA Rural Housing Service Loan Guaranty Program

This program is a federally funded program from the Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Rural Housing Service. This program is available to all borrowers seeking mortgages throughout Berkshire County, with the exception of the City of Pittsfield. Through the Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan Program, moderate-income earners can qualify for existing single-family mortgages without a down payment. This program is currently available at Lee Bank.

MassHousing General Lending Program – 1st Time Homebuyers

MassHousing partners with Lee Bank, Berkshire Bank, and Legacy Banks to assist credit-worthy, low and moderate income, first time home buyers whose income and home purchase price fall within federally-set guidelines with financing and educational assistance.

Alford residents have not participated in this program in the past 5 years, Source: [MassHousing Stats](#)

As of March 6, 2002, eligibility requirements for MassHousing programs in Alford are:

Chart H-9: Income Limits For MassHousing Programs In Alford			
Income Limits		Acquisition Cost Limits	
1 - 2 Persons	\$ 66,000	New Construction	Existing Housing
3 or More	\$ 75,900	Single Family \$ 277,100	Single Family \$198,000
		2 Family n/a	2 Family \$223,350
			3 Family \$270,450
			4 Family \$314,400

Appendix D

MassHousing Septic Repair Loan Program

The Septic Repair Loan Program is a state-wide program established under Chapter 708 of the acts of 1966 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that is funded by MassHousing and available locally at Lee Bank. The MassHousing program offers reduced interest rate loans of \$1,000 - \$25,000 to cover costs associated with the upgrade of a failed sewage disposal system within the meaning of Title 5. Homeowners may qualify for 0%, 3% or 5% interest rates based on household income (see chart H-10). Repairs are for owner-occupied primary-residences only, not for second homes. The program is popular and several such loans are given out every year throughout the county. Few local applicants have failed to qualify. The Average Loan amount for a Septic Repair Loan has been relatively high, as the program's closing cost requirements have discouraged smaller value loans. The program began with a \$13 million State grant; it is considered successful; and is expected to continue with self-sufficient funds from loan payments.

In the last five fiscal years, no homeowners from Alford have participated in this assistance program. (Source: [MassHousing Use Figures for FY96-01](#))

Chart H-10: Income Limits for Septic Repair Loans in Berkshire County

Loan Rate	1-2 person family	3 or more persons
0%	\$23,000	\$26,000
3%	\$46,000	\$52,000
5%	\$92,000	\$104,000

MassHousing Home Improvement Loan Program

Local residents are also eligible for participation in the Home Improvement Loan Program at MassHousing. This program is available through Lee Bank, and residents of other towns in Berkshire County have participated. The program offers financing for income-eligible homeowners to repair their homes. Eligible properties are one-to-four family properties and residential condominiums, and the residence must be the borrower's principal residence for minimum of one year. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000 - \$25,000 for loan terms of 5 to 15 years.

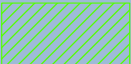
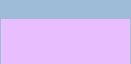
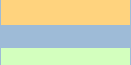
In the last five fiscal years no residents from Alford have participated in this program. Source: [MassHousing Use Figures for FY96-01](#)

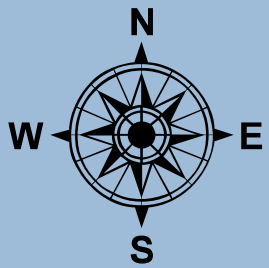
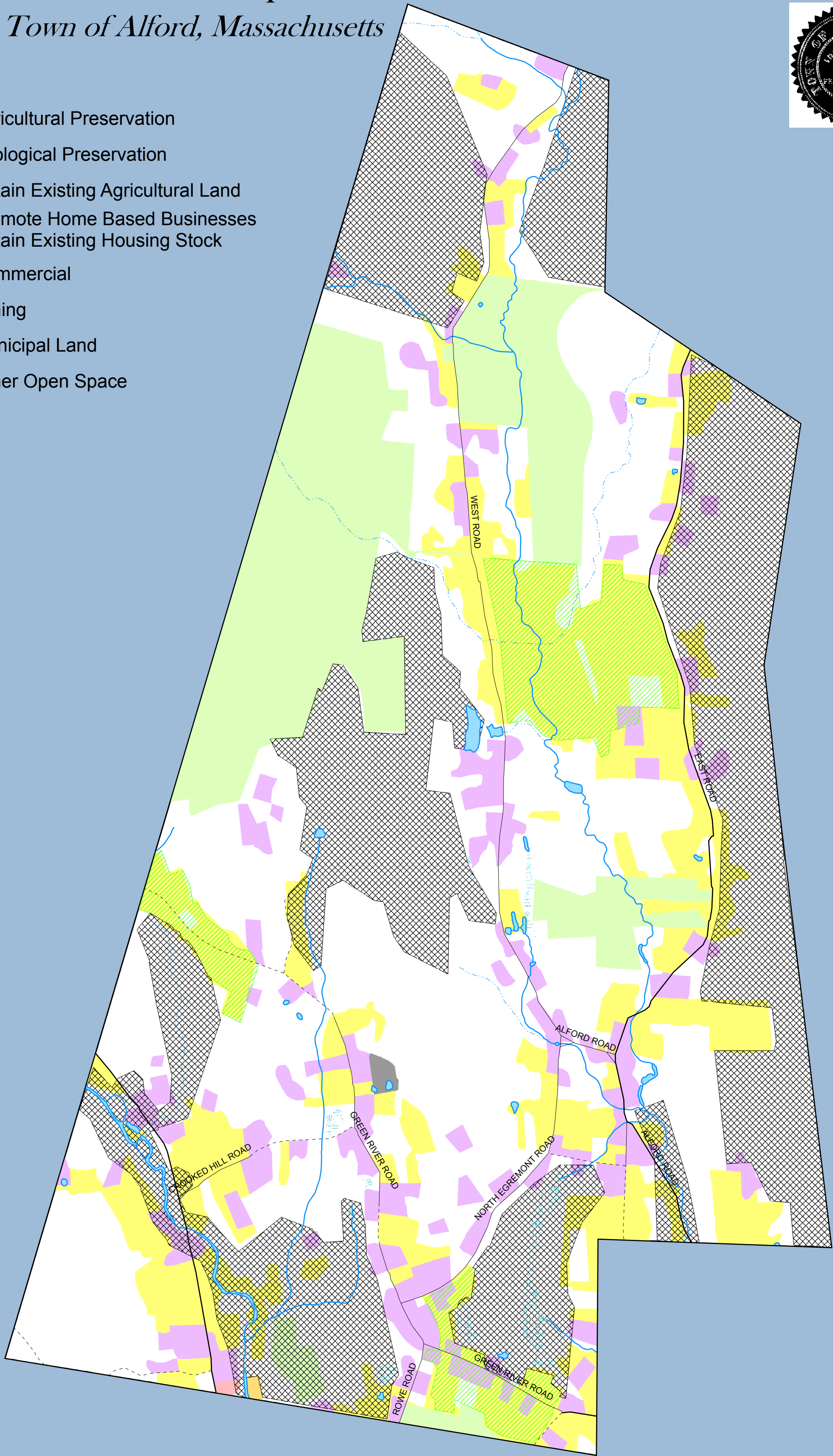
For more information on this program, contact MassHousing or Lee Bank.

Community Development Plan Land Use Suitability Action Map

Town of Alford, Massachusetts



-  Agricultural Preservation
-  Ecological Preservation
-  Retain Existing Agricultural Land
-  Promote Home Based Businesses
Retain Existing Housing Stock
-  Commercial
-  Mining
-  Municipal Land
-  Other Open Space



0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, Massachusetts Highway Department, BRPC or the town may have supplied portions of this data.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

/cdp/alf/projects/actionmap.mxd

May 20, 2004

Alford, Massachusetts



Open Space

The Town of Alford created their first Open Space Plan. This Plan describes some of the important cultural, historical and natural assets in the Town. It also provides recommendations for conserving natural and agricultural lands and features, enhancing recreational opportunities and maintaining the unique pastoral character of the Town.

Some of the key recommended actions:

- Establish an Open Space Committee
- Protect all water resources: ponds, streams, wetlands and sub-surface storage areas
- Preserve significant open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately.
- Preserve familiar vistas, roads, gateway areas and historic sites
- Encourage agricultural enterprises/landscapes.
- Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment.

Transportation

The transportation element focused on creating an Official Map for the Town of Alford. The official map, once formally adopted by a town, becomes a legal instrument that graphically delineates right-of way ownership, maintenance responsibilities and provides towns with guidance in determining frontage claims for the purposes of ANR development.

The products that meet this required element are:

- Narrative Report describing rationale, procedural issues and substantive issues related to creating the Official Map
- The Official Map document



Economic Development

This portion of the Community Development Plan reviews the economic growth or decline in the Town of Alford.

Four Challenges facing Alford in economic development are:

1. A narrow tax base that depends heavily on residential taxpayers
2. Resistance to commercial development in the Town
3. Lack of infrastructure that would encourage economic development, even on a small-scale
4. The receding role that agriculture plays in the local economy

Some of the key recommendations to allow for economic development are listed here:

- Support local lands being put into Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Consider establishing a local, or regional Agricultural Committee, Agricultural Development Corporation or Farm Trust
- Educate community and the region on the importance of agriculture to the local economy and character
- Identify farm owners and operators needing additional community support and assistance to remain viable
- Connect farmers with support organizations that provide organizational and technical assistance
- Support the creation of non-traditional agricultural development models
- Foster partnerships and working relationships with existing regional agricultural organizations ...
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they are “farm-friendly” and do not pose potential barriers to responsible farm operations that would like to expand or start-up
- Ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the community.
- Explore means of improving local infrastructure and tele-communications systems, particularly accessibility to reliable cell-phone coverage and high-speed internet

Housing

This element addressed the fact that the Town of Alford has no qualifying single housing units that fall under Chapter 40B affordable housing. The cost of new homes being built in Alford has risen significantly since the late 1990s. The assessment found that a small number of housing units have building code violations and are becoming dilapidated. Overall, the town still has a number of homes that are affordable across a broad range of incomes. However, the affordability analysis did indicate some small gaps in affordability at the low and moderate-income levels.

Recommended Actions:

- Form an affordable housing committee
- Develop an affordable housing plan
- Consider the creation and adoption of by-laws that the need for affordable housing with concerns for open space protection
- Work with regional housing organizations to seek Executive Order 418 certification
- Begin involvement in developing affordable home ownership options
- Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act and the creation of a Community Housing Trust
- Determine interest/support among local framers to develop on-site worker housing
- Consider development of affordable homeownership options
- Consider participation in a local or regional housing rehabilitation program

